

























# A Slav island in the German sea

GERALD STONE:  
The Smallest Slavonic Nation  
The Sorbs of Lusatia.  
201pp. Athlone Press. £3.50.

This is a thoroughly satisfactory book, which meets a need. All slavophiles are vaguely aware of the Sorbs, a small group of Slavs who still survive south-west of Berlin, in the valley of the Spree. They are the last survivors of the great linguistic empire of Slav-speakers which in the Middle Ages ran up to the Elbe and as far west as Lüneburg, but was pushed back over the centuries by German, leaving nothing but memory and place-names behind them. The Sorbs survived, but only just: few in number, rather dim, and surrounded on all sides by German-speakers (at least till 1945: from Gerald Stone's excellent map it looks as if at some points Sorb-speakers may survive on the west bank of the Neisse, where Poles have displaced Germans on the east).

The ordinary amateur slavophile knows remarkably little about the Sorbs. Even their name is a bit of a puzzle—who invented it? Mr Stone does not say. The Germans used to call them Wends, which is regarded as no less insulting than calling the Scots Scotch; they call themselves Serbs, which is too confusing for international use; the word used in Latin was Sarmatian. Anyway, Sorb, if a trifle tritely, is unambiguous and

nowadays generally accepted. Our amateur knows that they centre round Bautzen and Cottbus; that there are a large number of dialects; and that two literary languages have been developed, of which Lower Sorb (round Cottbus) looks rather like Polish and Upper Sorb (round Bautzen) looks rather like Czech. He knows, also, that they now live wholly in the German Democratic Republic. And he assumes that no more is to be discovered.

Mr Stone has studied the Sorbs deeply, and has provided an excellent general account of them, which gives everything that the ordinary slavophile will want to know, and a bibliography that covers many books which have recently been published in East Germany. He deals with history, literature, language, folk culture, folklore and music, and he ends with a useful assessment of the present-day position, based on personal study.

This is, as he says, a very small and indeed a dwindling "nation"; nor is it a nation, to quote his parallel, like Wales, where there are plenty of English-speakers who feel themselves fully Welsh. If a man ceases to speak Sorb, he ceases to think of himself as a Sorb; he becomes a German. The Sorbs are therefore hardly more than a community of Sorb-speakers. The area within which Sorb is spoken is about the size of Devon, but they are

mixed up with Germans: the towns have long been predominantly German. It is thought that there are about 70,000 speakers.

Lower Sorb—meaning both a group of dialects and a literary language derived from them—is centred on Cottbus, which from 1815 onwards was in Prussia, where the pressure of Germanization was stronger; it tends to fade out. Upper Sorb, round Bautzen, was in Saxony, where the authorities were kinder to their Slav subjects, and it remains the dominant form of the language. Upper and Lower Sorb are closely related to each other, though there are innumerable problems to be solved both more closely related to Polish than to Czech, though both have many points in common with the latter. Mr Stone explores the general belief that Upper Sorb is closer to Czech and Lower Sorb to Polish; this rests largely on a very noticeable but fairly recent phonological change (*g* to *h*) which is shared not only by Czech and Upper Sorb, but also (as he might have added) by Ukrainian—an example of the Balkan phenomenon of phonological changes which overstep linguistic boundaries. It might also be added, for the very amateur slavophile—so amateur that Mr Stone does not think the point worth mentioning for him—that Upper Sorb spelling is heavily influenced by Czech, which makes the literary language look more similar

to Czech than it sounds.

The history of Sorb culture is fairly typical of that of a minority language in a German-speaking area, minus (except at one point) any political urge to independence. For centuries the Sorbs were rural serfs, under German landlords. Their language began to appear in writing after the Reformation, when a few religious texts were produced. In the eighteenth century interest increased, and a Catholic minority was influential, with encouragement from Prague—indeed until quite recently there were two forms of the Upper Sorb literary language, Protestant and Catholic. Things began to move under the influence of nationalist and Pan-Slav feeling in the nineteenth century; but the poets, journalists and other national heroes were still mostly pastors and priests (who worked well together in the national cause) since they were almost the only educated Sorbs. At Versailles, encouraged by the Czechs, they made a faint bid for independence, which got nowhere. Disappointingly, Mr Stone does not mention the legend, which forms part of the oral folklore of the Peace Conference, that the only reason that they got even a hearing was the intelligence, energy, and above all the remarkable personal attraction of a young lady on the Sorb delegation. Did this *vila* exist? And if so, what happened to her?

The one effect of this attempt, the only movement towards independence of an otherwise loyal part of Germany, was to arouse the suspicions of the Weimar republic, which continued to germanize. From 1937 onwards the Nazis suppressed them. But the GDR has taken exactly the opposite line. Nowadays, to be Slav is to be fashionable; and the

authorities have done everything possible, in fact and not merely on paper, to encourage Sorb education and studies, which flourish as never before. But, alas, the facts of life work against this movement. Exports for isolated villages and farms, studies, they seem bound in the long run to be assimilated. Brown coal is being mined on a large scale in their territory, and German workers move in. Germans from across the Neisse have been settled in Lusatia. With greater mobility, Sorbs move out. Since all Sorbs are bilingual whenever a family, a village or a work-team contains some Germans, all speak German. The admirable linguistic atlas which is now being prepared is almost too late: many dialects are dead or dying, killed by self-germanization and by the increasing use among Sorb-speakers of the two literary languages.

The literature is primarily of local interest. Folk-song has been well recorded. Folk culture is interesting, but it would have been useful to hear more (if the material exists) about what aspects are purely Sorb and what are shared with German neighbours. One suspects, quite a lot of the latter: he quotes, for example, with a photograph, the Sorb type of haystack, which looks indistinguishable from a type to be seen in many German-speaking regions.

Good luck to the Sorbs: like many a minority, they need it if they are to survive, for all the genuine help given by the GDR. Anyway, here we have an admirable general account of them which will be of help to all slavophiles; no one can now plead inevitable ignorance if he has not the time or energy to pursue this rather marginal topic through numerous specialist publications, often outdated.

## The Vendetta and much more

DOROTHY CARRINGTON:  
Granite Island  
A Portrait of Corsica  
336pp plus 29 plates. Longman. £5.

When she first went to Corsica, Lady Carrington tells us, only 2 per cent of the land was cultivated. There are many such odd little facts scattered here and there through *Granite Island*, usually making points of importance and suddenly and sharply jolting the reader's attention into awareness of what an extraordinary place it is. The strong flavour of Corsican society is now being softened, as in so many places, the tourists are great levellers. It is all the more desirable, therefore, that so close an observer as Lady Carrington, looking at the place with the eye both of the anthropological observer and of the lover of its opacities and silences, should set down the immediacy of its first great impact upon her. That was made, it appears, some time after 1945 but before 1960; she now proclaims the infatuation which then came upon her. The result is a very enjoyable book.

Excellent and devoted, none the less, do not make a book easy to review. To be cool about it is like being cool about someone else's love affair; a certain truth is dis-

cernible, but the life is missing. At its best, *Granite Island* reaches something of the level of another work of devotion, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, and the method employed is not dissimilar. The articulation of the book is provided by a journey—it is a pity that no scale is provided on the map, but this may enhance the magical feeling of some passages for readers who have no idea of what distances are involved—and this breaks the book into a series of geographical and human sequences. Over these has been laid the work of reflection and reading. In something of a tour de force, Lady Carrington imposes on the journey a roughly chronological sequence, too; as we follow her round the island, so we move from the primeval status-memories of the Sartenes through the centuries to French departmental status and the crumbling of the old patterns in the past decade or so.

The historical mode suits the description of so rich and subtle a society, but the social anthropologist reinforces the historian's skill. Every one has heard of the vendetta, but Lady Carrington explains much more: the *squadra d'Herode*, Paoli's constitutional innovations, the *viceratelli*, the complicated attitudes surrounding the nuptial kiss.

There is one particularly fine set piece, an interview with one of the mysterious *mazzari*, harbingers of death, which ends with the woman suddenly sliding away into the *maquis*, perhaps to set out on her mission. This was in the Sartenes, the southern region, where there abound the status-memories on which the book contains much vigorous speculation.

When she returned there, Lady Carrington was disappointed that local archaeological endeavour had been so little stirred by her passionate advocacy of research about these mysterious monoliths. It seems permissible to suspend judgment for a little about some of what has been seen in them. Someone who has not experienced the fascination of these strange carvings will not at once appreciate her conviction that the essence of a humanism which she sees as the justifying core of Corsican civilization since the prehistoric era. Once into historical times her interpretation is always more convincing and rings true; history, as she shows, still moves into the lives of the people she has talked to about their past. There is a great secret to be unveiled in the Corsican capacity to avoid spiritual impoverishment for so long. But then, the Corsicans were never the depressed peasants of other lands, nor have they had an industrial proletarian.

Such themes raise this book much above the level of the ordinary travel book. (*Granite Island* in fact won this year's Heinemann Award for Literature.) If sometimes, the vision is a little romantic—and despite Lady Carrington, space, silence and fresh air are not things that every peasant knows—what she tells us about things she has not had time to explore here, the persistent and prominent role of Corsicans in the criminal life of metropolitan France, for example, or the career of another Corsican of Napoleonic times, Suvoici. What she has already done is to provide an incomparable picture of a society disappearing (as Clemenceau thought it might) under the impact of prosperity. It may soon have documentary status, like the books of Gerald Brenan, for another part of the Mediterranean littoral, as a record of the forms of one of those simpler, heretic societies, which have fascinated Anglo-Saxons so long.

## Russian workers

REGINALD E. ZELNIK:  
Labor and Society in Tsarist Russia  
450pp. Stanford University Press.  
London: Oxford University Press.  
£7.25.

The subtitle of Reginald Zelnik's book is "The Factory Workers of St Petersburg 1855-1870". It is the first part of a projected two-volume study of the rise of industrial labour in Russia during the reign of Alexander II. A second volume covering the period 1871-1881, the years of Populist-worker interaction, is in preparation, but it is already possible, on the evidence of this first volume, to welcome an imaginative and well-researched contribution to Russian social and economic history.

There are two main reasons for such a verdict. First, this book covers the significant, but relatively neglected, early period in the history of Russia's industrial workers. Most Western and Soviet historians have tended to concentrate on the more dramatic, later moments of unrest and the industrial workers' links with revolutionary Marxist intellectuals and political groups. The years covered by this volume give us, as Professor Zelnik claims in his introduction, the only opportunity to study the situation of Russia's urban workers independently of the history of revolutionary politics. Secondly, the author is one of that small group of Western scholars, predominantly American, who have succeeded over the past decade or so in gaining access to valuable archive material in the Soviet Union and whose work has consequently acquired a freshness and sometimes a depth absent in earlier works of synthesis.

Although his study is focused mainly on the city of St Petersburg, Professor Zelnik's aim is ambitious. No one to date, he claims, has tried to examine the situation of the nineteenth-century Russian worker as part of the context of early industrialization, to assess the impact of his early experiences on his subsequent political evolution, or

to investigate the interaction between the workers' situation and the attitudes and actions of other segments of society before the 1890s. His book is intended to be "the first step in such an endeavour", and he has displayed considerable energy and ingenuity in unearthing new information on these questions.

Energy and ingenuity were essential, because the position of the Russian factory worker at this time has attracted little attention. Certainly the intelligentsia had little interest in him or in the industrial complexes that were forming around the periphery of St Petersburg and Moscow. As Rose Gluckman pointed out in a valuable recent essay, there is only one Russian novel, F. M. Reshetnikov's *Where It Is Better*, that can be compared in scope and detail to the industrial novel of nineteenth-century England. Professor Zelnik makes use of it, but he also provides us with a wealth of material on the industrial development and population patterns of St Petersburg, and on the labour unrest and the problems of disease and depravity among the city's industrial workers gleaned from a wide variety of published and unpublished sources.

Beyond this Professor Zelnik gives us a useful account of the various attitudes, both in government circles and in society generally, towards the labour question, culminating the debate on industrialization, the work of the government commissions of 1857-64, the Sunday School movement, and the professional organizations, such as the Imperial Russian Technical Society. His emphasis on St Petersburg tends at times to make him ignore or treat briefly developments outside the capital, but he makes some very good points, on the alleged anti-industrialism of the Russian left, on the response to the proposals of the St Petersburg Committee of 1859, and on the issue of the Nevskii strike of 1870. This is an original and thoughtful piece of historical research, and one looks forward to the appearance of its sequel.

PHILOSOPHY

## Sticking to the facts

DAVID KOLAKOWSKI:  
Philosophy  
Translated by Norbert Guterman  
Pp. Penguin. Paperback, 40p.

This book is an introduction to the history of the positivist philosophy, its development from the time of Hume to the recent past and its function in our culture. The author rightly avoids too narrow a definition of a widespread and ramified philosophical movement and affirms its relations to, and affinities with, other philosophical positions such as Poincaré's conventionalism, Peirce's pragmatism and the epistemological philosophy of G. E. Moore. The core of the positivist philosophy—preserved in all its versions—is a set of principles which legitimize separate knowledge, and various claims to knowledge, and philosophical or scientific questions. Leszek Kolakowski regards as most characteristic the principle of nominalism, to the effect that phenomena are not themselves, rather than any hidden essences, substances or forms; the principle of nominalism, to the effect that the general

words of a language (e.g. "cat") refer only to particular objects (cats) and not also to abstract objects (the Platonic Form of catness, the concept of a cat); the principle that value judgments, especially moral judgments, have no cognitive content; and lastly, the principle of the unity of scientific method and, consequently, of scientific knowledge.

Since positivism is an all-or-nothing philosophy which radically rejects all traditional metaphysics, discerning positivist tendencies in thinkers who are clearly not positivists may easily become rather pointless. While this danger is on the whole skillfully avoided, some of the alleged parallels are rather far-fetched. Thus Galileo's respect for the experimental method has little to do with positivism since it is combined with a conscious acceptance of Plato's account of the function of mathematics in science. And Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is no more positivist than Leibniz's *Monadology*. An understanding of the similarities and interactions between positivism, pragmatism and conventionalism, on the other hand, is essential to a full understanding of each of them—both as regards their origin and

their attitude to scientific knowledge. Hence, Dr Kolakowski's chapters on conventionalism and pragmatism are particularly valuable.

What he has to say about the various manifestations of pure positivism is always clear and instructive. He carefully and fairly examines Hume's epistemological theory and shows how his exaggerated conception of reliable knowledge led him to adopt an unreasonable scepticism. He describes Comte's philosophical system and separates its various independent parts from each other—in particular his history of the intellectual development of mankind, his conception of sociology as social physics and his curious positive religion. He explains the methodology of Claude Bernard and the general philosophical views of J. S. Mill, Bentham, Spencer and other thinkers of that period, which he rightly regards as the age of positivism triumphant.

There follows a chapter which is mainly devoted to the philosophy of Avenarius and Mach. Their views have been violently criticized by Lenin as a revival of Berkeley's subjective idealism, deprived of its

theological content and strengthened by a principle of conceptual economy. Lenin's criticism is mentioned, but—regrettably—it is not examined. The English general reader will be most familiar with the contents of the chapter on logical empiricism, even if—unlike the general reader of the last generation—he no longer regards it as the only reasonable philosophical position. The book ends with a brief evaluation of positivism and culminates in the thesis that when one tries to account for metaphysics, one must either accept the view that "reason" is a cancerous tissue in a sick species or an alien body originating in another world.

To justify this highly controversial thesis would, among other things, require a full analysis of the structure and function of metaphysical principles. Dr Kolakowski's essay contains, at most, some hints of such an analysis. He seems to think that the principles of positivism—its phenomenalism, nominalism and its rest—are themselves "metaphysical", but he does not offer any clear explanation of what is meant by this term.

## As men possessed

JOHN TUCKER:  
The Church  
Pp. Cambridge University Press.

In 1950 Ronald Knox published a book under this same title. He was describing the spiritual ethos of various churches and small groups within the Church who base their way of life on belief in direct divine inspiration and guidance, and he used the title *Christianism* in a broad sense, not confining himself to those to whom it was applied in a derogatory way by their contemporaries. Since I know no traces in detail the subtle shift of the word from a neutral and pejorative religious use to its secular sense, where it is generally commendatory, except that there is a suggestion that more than light is being engendered. Mr Tucker herself says that the word could be taken as an extended use of the group of words "enthusiasm", "enthusiast", "enthusiastic", and it rather reads as such. There are some forty-eight pages of text, with the help of which it should be possible for anyone to have a good chance of understanding how some authors, even obscure ones, between the seven and nineteenth centuries used the word. But it would be ungrateful to suggest that the book gives only a catalogue of usages. The quotations are grouped with care and introduced with wit, and sometimes wit. What is new is his attempt, apart from the usages, to relate changes in the use of the words to changes in social and religious milieu. Rather, Miss Tucker says she is deducing changes in the use of the words from semantic changes. These are not developed, however, through historical evidence independent of the words, or specifically.

These changes seem mainly to be seen as the notion of enthusiasm, a predominantly religious concept. Why was its technical religious meaning pejorative? Miss Tucker's questions amply dispose of the popular view that it was because the eighteenth century was a rationalistic period. Warmth, enthusiasm, zeal—these are all words which vehemently repudiated the charge of being an "enthusiasm". But only too ready to repudiate other hearts besides his own, Mr Tucker is only too ready to feel strangely warmed. A suspicion attached to enthusiasm was not only because it was a zeal not according to knowledge, but also because it was a zeal not according to knowledge. Miss Tucker's quotations are well chosen.

There is still here the sound of divine afflatus. Perhaps our contemporary enthusiasts for old railway lines, cricket, pop, still sometimes catch its whisper.

## Crossing the Channel

WOLFE MAYS and S. C. BROWN  
(Editors):  
Linguistic Analysis and Phenomenology  
307pp. Macmillan. £5.

In the late 1940s philosophers on the two sides of the philosophical channel—symbolized accurately enough by the Channel that up to now has actually protected Dover from Calais and Calais from Dover—were hardly taking any serious notice of each other at all. Ten years later they were beginning to feel that this was not an altogether intellectually respectable state of affairs; one owed it to oneself perhaps to present one's positions and some samples of one's work to those who were working in the darkness of the other side. But neither side much liked or understood what they saw of the other; the 1959 conference at Royaumont, which French and British philosophers came together for a week to discuss "La philosophie analytique" has achieved a largely merited fame as an example of near perfect non-communication. But now in the late 1960s and early 1970s philosophers on both sides of the schism are beginning to talk to and not simply at each other; and when they come together at conferences, it is clear that some are by now not only pretty well informed about, but have actually been to some extent influenced by, what they understand to be going on on the other side.

One must not exaggerate. The beginnings of genuine exchange are still only beginnings; the numbers of those who feel really at home in thought of as something which could attach itself as a desirable driving force to all good causes.

Miss Tucker does not find any clear demarcation in date between the approbatory and disapprobatory use of the word, though in the early nineteenth century the approbatory use is clearly gaining ground. Perhaps in this, as in so much else, Coleridge was aware of the issues. He understood from his own distress how, when inner kindling went, creative power went also. He was enough of an analyst of his psyche to know the ambiguity of its "deeper powers". And his interest in etymology took him back to the original Greek meaning of enthusiasm as possession by the divine. Miss Tucker quotes from the *Philosophical Lectures* (1819), where he says of Jacob Boehme (Boehme), "He was an enthusiast in the strict sense, as not merely distinguished, but as contradistinguished from a fanatic."

There is still here the sound of divine afflatus. Perhaps our contemporary enthusiasts for old railway lines, cricket, pop, still sometimes catch its whisper.

contributions made to the general elucidation of the nature of, say, phenomenology or linguistic analysis, but also by what is said on the issues actually under discussion—though the interest of what is said is often enough enriched by the ways in which the philosophers of different backgrounds set out to address each other on the subjects with which they are concerned. It is enriched too by the way in which the discussions between members of "opposite sides" are interwoven with disagreements between philosophers belonging to the "same side".

Again, one must not exaggerate. There are failures of communication; some of the papers (or chairmen's remarks) are less successful or interesting than others; the uninformed British reader might well derive a misleading overall impression of the contemporary importance of phenomenology and existentialism. Nevertheless, the sense is conveyed that the debate is at last coming alive.

As for the particular discussions, there is here no space to do more than mention those which struck this reviewer as being among the most rewarding—at any rate to the reader looking outwards from, even while still anchored within, his native analytical tradition. First and foremost, perhaps, Michel Dufrenoy's brief but refreshing contributions to the symposium on "The Critic and the Lover of Art"; M. Dufrenoy's claims to no more than an outsider's working acquaintance with analytic philosophy, yet R. K. Elliott is surely right to draw attention to the interest and importance that *anyone* interested in aesthetics should find in his work on the subject. Of the symposia concerned in one way or another with the concept of a person, the more notable is that chaired by P. F. Strawson and based on Hide Ishiguro's attempt to show how close is the connexion between the concept of personal identity and the person's conception of his future actions in what she calls the "cuboid world". There is a good deal of perhaps rather unsystematic interest, including some disputed references to Simone Weil, in the discussion between James Dancy and Peter Wicks on "Doing Good and Suffering Evil". And Professor Tugendhat's contribution to the debate on "Philosophical Methodology" with its briefly clear account of Husserlian method, is particularly worth reading.

There are of course other good things; but these, supply sufficient reason for anyone interested in the possibilities and difficulties of over-coming philosophical barriers to want to judge this book for himself.

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**GEORGES HAUPT:**  
**Socialism and The Great War**  
**The Collapse of the Second Inter-**  
**national.**  
270pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford  
University Press. £5.

How did this happen? Was it, as Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and other left-wing spokesmen alleged, a "betrayal" by the right-wing leaders? Or did the workers, as the right-wingers pleaded, desert their leaders? The question has been often discussed, usually in terms of the debate over the proposed general strike against war which occupied much time at international congresses. George Haupt provides a new approach. He has had access to the papers of the International Socialist Bureau, which conducted no affairs of the International before congresses. Starting from the failure of August, 1914, he goes back to the Moroccan crisis of 1911 and the Balkan war in 1912, when the international seemed to take a more successful line. From the first there was equivocation, particularly between the French and German

Confidence in the general desire to preserve peace grew stronger until the actual outbreak of the First World War. It is often held nowadays that there was mounting tension in Europe before August, 1914. Some historians even believe that the German and Austro-Hungarian governments were deliberately set on war. This was not how it seemed at the time, and con-

Taking this view—and it was a plausible, perhaps even a correct, view to take at the time—the International ceased to worry about the problem of war. The campaign which had been initiated at Basle died away. When the International Socialist Bureau met at Brussels in July, 1914, it was to discuss the business arrangements for the Vienna congress, not to prevent a European war. The crisis took the Socialists by surprise. Viktor Adler, the Austrian

We must explain . . . that the ordinary workers' organizations, even if they call themselves revolutionary, are utterly helpless in the face of an actually impending war.

We must take special pains to explain that the question of "defence of the fatherland" will inevitably arise, and that the overwhelming majority of the working people will inevitably decide it in favour of their bourgeoisie.

As a second factor, the govern-

**Socialism and the Great War** is most valuable book, stuffed with new information and new ideas. It helps to explain how Socialist parties, and in more recent times Communist parties also, have become respectable. It reinforces the view that the international calm after the Balkan wars was real and that the crisis of July 1914 blew up by surprise. Maybe if the Archduke Franz Ferdinand had not gone to Sarajevo, the Socialist International could have met at Vienna and discussed the general strike against war. Indeed, Socialism might be discussing it still.

Now, in general, does the book deserve the keen attention it receives from broadcasting? What happens in the work we are accustomed to digest in private and familiar surroundings, as it were, re-processed for the camera or microphone? In this article I should like to look at some traits of radio and television which, it seems, affect fundamentally their capacity to handle literature, in the two that follow. I shall give examples of that handling and try in more detail what are its effects.

# The limits of the electronic media

From one point of view this may appear obvious: if speech is slower than reading and must in any case be watered down, and if one must occasionally stop the flow of words to let the picture speak, of course there will be less. Print, as I have said, stays with the reader and he can be ransacked for its breadth. Yet surely in both its forms broadcasting is much nearer to truth: everyday experience; radio may deliver fewer words, but it communicates more significant information in the form of tone of voice, pause, emphasis, accent, vocal mannerism and the like. Television goes further: it may use fewer words, but it adds not only voice, but physical appearance, facial expression, ges-

Writers tame or process this experience. They lie in wait for it a thousand times and when they have the shape of it, they put it into words; they slow experience down—the moment of reaction in Henry James's hands spreads over the pages of analysis. The condensed book is concentrated experience; by contrast, in life, moments of intense and ambiguous input are succeeded by long hours in which nothing very much appears to be happening. Is this then one of the attractions of the book, of *The Portrait of a Lady*, say: that it is not only very dense, but that it combines precision with a depth of suggestiveness beyond what we ourselves can encompass? Do words render experience manageable in this way, or is the reverse the case, which always declares itself to be less manageable than any of the farns of words discovered for it?

other faculties do not develop as they should, not only for lack of exercise, but because the impatience, the voracity even, and the literalism associated with our perceptions keep us perpetually busy. Think of the eye, restless, always seeking stimulus as a remedy against the tedium to which it seems so prone—it is this which most of the time governs our attention. Television has to keep the eye content; radio must turn inward; both must deal extensively in unspoken messages. In information which can only be written in and decoded if the whole perceptual apparatus is sharp and well-controlled. The radio or television writer must find easily accepted sound and visual equivalents to neat and solid packages of words; his audience must read them off. One reason why we often feel dissatisfaction with that act of substitution may well be that in this kind of writing and reading most of us have never learned

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**LLEWELLYN, WOODWARD:**  
**British Foreign Policy in the Second**  
**World War**  
 Volume III.  
 620pp., HMSO. £5.

This self-denying ordinance was something of a handicap in dealing with the Yugoslavs and the Greeks. Although Woodward's understanding of the Soviet attitude towards the

Following the Foreign Office line, Woodward took it for granted that the mutinies in the Greek armed forces of the Middle East in April 1944 were deliberately caused by EAM, although cogent evidence for that assumption is lacking and the mutin-

King George was of course a shrewd born man, who was not well acquainted with the mood of his people. He was officials of the British Foreign Office. Wartime circumstances were indeed not well suited to their special talents. There were many stout men of great or growing experience to be dealt with—Stalin, Roosevelt, de Gaulle, Tito—and there were many countries inaccessible to the normal means of acquiring information by which the Foreign Office was practised. That is why the process of formulating and executing foreign policy in wartime could not be left exclusively in the hands of professional diplomats. It additionally needed the less delicate hands of powerful politicians and some organizations—a disserviceable but a fact. And that is also why the history of British foreign policy during the Second World War, even in the hands of such a master of his profession as Llewellyn Woodward, could not be written from the files of the Foreign Office alone.

On television matters are even worse. Woe unto the man who has to write 2,000 words in the expectation of delivering them in full colour to a millioned audience, for he will be rejected. The car will take as much as thirty minutes of uninterrupted solo talk through a radio, and you and I together find this very unattractive. "People who followed "Writers in Society", a literary lectures broadcast towards the end of last year, may agree that they were the dullest television ever seen. The same criticism can be

Books still occupy a position of prestige in our society: we have enormous confidence in literacy, believing with Bacon that "reading maketh a full man"—and by "full" we do not mean replete. Scripture may end with the Bible, but in effect it starts a long way short of that; many of our classics have a sort of sanctity, and we feel reproachful of those who tamper with them; there is virtue in uncut text. Reading will improve us, and so: be well-read... is in some

their reader must at some stage check them against his own experience, he does not have to do so very often. It is as if a man were to build up an extensive knowledge of butterflies from occasional work in the field and, for the rest, from undivided attention to collections, in cases. In all his knowledge one essential feature of the butterfly, the living movement in light and space, would play a rather minor part, although he could to some degree make up for this by memory and by his imagination.

It may be that another situation of books and written words has to do with the very powerful need we have to make sense of our environment. Although the messages we receive from other human beings are quick and shiffling, light and bearing, they are not always easy to pick up, and, by a sort of intuitive, sub-verbal apprehension, to interpret them aright: we may indeed be perfectly correct to pay attention to a first reaction of dislike. However, an aspect of the need to make good sense is that it is both literal and impatient: it wants things put in order, spelled out, and it wants them immediately. "Why do I not like

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dish is brought out to be thawed, as you might say, and then digested by an electronic gut. The nutrition is dispersed around the national body to millions of individual cells or, more precisely, to things resembling organs, massive conglomerations of cells. Some of these it seems prefer a diet of "Play for Today". Review of the latest importation on Radio 3; others of Z-Cur, *Coronation Street* and *The Archers*; yet others of quite different things. It is characteristic of this body-audience that each part of it insistently demands its own type of nutrition: to keep it satisfied the cooks must offer an extremely varied diet and must process most of it so as to make it easily assimilable—many of this body's organs are not so vigorous that they can deal with roughage easily, and although they want variety they also want the old familiar foods. It is another of its characteristics that it adores a personality and will swallow anything, provided the people who serve it are charming and beautiful enough.

However, once this process of disposal has taken place, the programme is, in the most terminal sense, finished. Perhaps it will be served a second time, but only because, owing to the body's curious habit, not all of it can always take in what it wants at once, or because sufficient time has elapsed for an identical item to seem attractive. And identical it is: almost everything we see and hear in broadcast has passed out of the realms of flesh and blood and chance long before we encountered it. It was manufactured and packed, distributed and consumed, burnt up, all gone. Next menu, please.

Blaming the broadcasters for the awful things that appear on our screens or drop out of our loudspeakers has become a national blood sport. The alimentary metaphor suggests that before taking up the scent we ought to count seven; that much of what we see and hear is precisely what we asked for, and that it is as it is because we are as we are. Radio and television give

back a seemingly rather accurate reflection of the national taste, and the things we complain of may be the inescapable concomitants of an organic relationship between broadcasters and their audience. I am not suggesting that the men who make broadcasting are the helpless slaves of their gargantuan body's various additions: on the contrary they often seem to hold the office of a brain and one, moreover, with a rudimentary grasp of dietetics, knowing that despite loud and insistent shouts—for crisps, for candy-floss, for various mind-numbing barbiturates—a certain minimum of solid nutriment must go in.

By the very nature of the relationship, however, there is no alternative to taking account of the demands and trying to meet as many as is possible. The result of this is what we see played back to us: if there is almost always a tendency to haste, this is due to our insistence on variety; so are many of the superficialities, which also represent the levels of our comprehension. If presentation glosses over lack of content, this is because we need encouragement to assimilate, while at the back of every endeavour is the knowledge that nothing is for ever, lest most of what is broadcast is served and eaten and forgotten utterly.

Books and book programmes suffer from this alimentary relationship less than most; their audiences are in the main minorities with specialized and quite robust digestive powers. Nevertheless, as we shall see, suffer they do, both here and from the literary thinning-down which broadcasting imposes on its scripts. Despite this, in all its forms, the handling of books adds vastly to the interest, even to the delight, of radio and television. A well-read audience must take from them what it can and, knowing what the limitations are, not prejudice its own enjoyment by expecting what the media are not equipped to give.

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# Beating the bulldozers

WAYLAND KENNET:  
Preservation  
224pp. Temple Smith. £2.40.

A manual on preservation for local amenity societies was a good idea, and Lord Kennet, as parliamentary secretary responsible for environment in the last government, was a good person to write it. He has produced with sense and humour a primer for every local hon secretary's desk.

For historical background he summons up John Aubrey getting himself made churchwarden to save Broadchalke church, William Stukeley shaming a farmer who broke up ancient vaulted stones near Avebury "for the little, dirty profit", and Sir John Lubbock attempting to introduce the first preservation law in England. Reactions to James Wyatt's trail of incoherence through our cathedrals having produced the corrections of Gilbert Scott, further reaction produced William Morris's Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the first modern pressure group for architectural preservation. Meanwhile, the wind of public opinion veered enough for a weak Ancient Monuments Protection Act to be passed in 1882. With the help of the Society of Antiquaries Lubbock had drawn up the first-ever lists of monuments to be preserved (and it may be of interest that he published three schedules—listing 29 monuments in England and Wales, 21 in Scotland, and 22 in Ireland—with an ardent article in the April 1877 number of the now *Nineteenth Century*). These monuments were far more ancient than the medieval buildings Morris sought to protect—stone circles, like Stonehenge, and earthen barrows—preservation law having to begin at the beginning, interfering with vested rights as little as possible.

Then, in 1911, Tattershall Castle in Lincolnshire was threatened with export to America (not, as the author suggests, the case that later inspired the film *The Ghost Goes West*, which was more likely based on the wholesale imports of William Randolph Hearst). A stronger Ancient Monuments Bill was accordingly brought in, under which a preservation order would have to be confirmed by Parliament, and

not including inhabited buildings. (The first preservation order submitted to Parliament under this Act was for 75 Dean Street in Soho, an eighteenth-century house used for business purposes and about to lose its painted staircase and its character to America, which is what happened in the end.)

The first workable law protecting buildings of "special architectural or historic interest" came with the Town and Country Planning Act of 1932, introduced by the author's father. The further development of legislation—that is, of willingness to regulate private rights—up to the present is clearly and compactly told, and the period 1966-70 is dealt with from the point of view of the author's own involvement, especially in the "conservation area" idea under the last Labour government. He names names where praise is due among his colleagues and other workers in the field, even including the more intransigent secretaries of national preservation bodies ("exhausting working with these people, but... highly enjoyable"); one or two prominent names not mentioned suggest that even the most high-minded politicians do not get on with everybody.

The chapter that the grassroots hon sec will turn to is "Advice to amenity societies", which is not intended to supersede two practical Civic Trust pamphlets on the subject. It starts with a general homily on local democracy. Here Lord Kennet briefly picks up a big subject and gives it a brisk and timely airing: the *trahison des clercs*, of intellectuals and aesthetes who will not soil their hands with local (or national) government though they do start local amenity societies—"idiots" in the ancient Greek sense, abstainers from practical democracy, taking notice of their elected representatives only to despise them. When "The brigadiers and the poets, in uneasy alliance, descend upon the Town Hall and tell the Council they are a lot of Philistines", they will have to discover what it is the local councillor knows and they themselves do not. A healthy working relationship might even bring more people to stand for the Council. The ensuing twenty pages of instruction on how to become familiar with the local de-

velopment plan, and on the machinery of planning and interference with planning, are what the hon sec will need most, along with the previous chapter on recent legislation and the case histories to complete the book. It would probably help planners every voter and ratepayer—and the new set of journalists-reporting on monumental matters—were to read these pages. Not that there is some of the glissade of the professional politician here. A French section, where rents rose so high as to return, "would be out of question in England". If the building of Covent Garden is a clean sweep and leaves a former occupiers be able to

Lord Kennet is too sanguine. Three out of four of his anecdotes are well, or as well, as could possibly be expected (the volunteers must not be discouraged too early on). The climate in the Georgian Group had to open in the 1930s was "unlike the open

When both the Euston Arch and the Coal Exchange went was only years ago, London's new landscape was discriminatory response in all the present Government has in mind for Whitehall? What of the partial floating-out of the nation's famous Houses of Parliament, as seen from the South Bank and Waterloo Bridge, by giant piling cases up-ended to house the Department of the Environment? Lord Kennet's advice for the plain man dealing with planners does not begin against bodies exempt from planning control. Other times, other Governments, is doubtless the political answer. What can the citizen practising democracy do about that, except vote, shout, and wait? He can improve his own architectural literacy, for one thing. This manual assumes he has such literacy, but it should not; its moves in circles that can read plan and discourse with architects, but communications between architects and the neighbours are a prime reason for misunderstandings on preservation. The advice in this book is good as far as it goes.

# Birds of small brain

LOUIS J. HALLE:  
The Storm Petrel and the Owl of Athens  
268pp. Princeton University Press, London: Oxford University Press. £3.60.

This is an unusual book, the title of which has little to do with the contents. It is divided into two separate parts. In part one, the author presents us with eight essays, the results of a sixteen-day visit to the Shetland Islands at a time when the sea birds were breeding. In his opening essay, Louis Halle tells of his experiences on Mousa, a small uninhabited island, and of finding the storm petrel "mysteriously hidden in the depths of a brook", a round tower on the coast—whose origin is unknown—of great antiquity, built of natural flat stones, without cement, in the crevices of which the petrels were nesting. Studying this colony day and night, Professor Halle tells us what he found and then proceeds to give us a glimpse of the human world seen only along its outermost fringes. It is always interesting to see ourselves as others see us; here we obtain a glimpse of Shetland and its extraordinary bird life through the eyes of a distinguished American scholar and philosopher.

In his second article, the life of the fulmar is presented in some detail. Professor Halle takes exception to the fulmar being likened to the gull (which it resembles only in colour), preferring to liken it to a small albatross. His study of the

fulmar convinced him that it belongs to an order of primitive small-brained birds almost all of which live on the open sea. He postulates that sea birds (from which he evidently excludes gulls and terns) may be less intelligent than land-birds because the environment they have to cope with offers less variety, instancing in support of his argument the stupidity of boobies and mollymauks.

There are occasional slips. Professor Halle's statement that the fulmar has become the most abundant sea-bird of the Northern Hemisphere is surely open to argument. Throughout the essay, the author's evidence produced by the late James Fisher whom he constantly quotes. Professor Halle brings a philosophical mind to bear in all his essays and gives his readers cause to ponder over many of his deductions arising from his study of our Shetland birds: the relationship of gulls and men, the similar relationship of Sooty Terns (Phalaropes for preference) the gannet and the ancient Egyptians. These all come in for his attention in the first part of his book. For one obviously so widely read, he makes some extraordinary statements (p. 61): "There is not a single species of bird that even approaches being exclusive to the British Isles, let alone Shetland." Has he never heard of a grouse? *Lagopus lagopus*?

The second part of this book is a collection of articles on a variety of subjects which have already been

published in the United States. The inclusion here appears to have been the responsibility of the Princeton editor. Professor Halle describes them as "short pieces on nature topics closely related to nature written over the years". One is entitled "The Owl of Athens"—a mythical bird—and the essay is about as far removed from the theme of the book as chalk from cheese. The chapter on March Tunes is a charming short sketch of migration on the Lake of Geneva. From there we are taken to the Pampas of Argentina—and for the reviewer, who is equally familiar with the subject, and still better with the country, this is the best essay in the book. The author says his purpose is little more than to suggest the wealth of birds that fill the Pampas from Hudson's Bay, and he has done this very well. Argentina still, *il mecca* for any nature-lover, more especially for an ornithologist. Professor Halle's book has great deal in it for an inquiring mind: all his more personal observations ring true, it will afford a naturalist some enjoyable moments. The pen and ink digress through a variable mark, but in most instances caught the birds or birds they portray and are a distinct asset to this rather high-priced book.

George Allen and Unwin have asked us to announce that later this year they will be publishing the British edition of Norwood Russell Robinson's *Observation and Explanation* which we reviewed on January 21.

# Literary criticism of political rhetoric

L. KNIGHTS:  
Chatter and Windus. £1.75.

Although this book is given the subtitle "Literature and Politics with special reference to the Seventeenth Century" it is itself a shortened version of a longer and still more cautiously titled (the jacket summary is longer in claiming the suggestions made "concerning the relation between politics and the imaginative life found in great literature of the period of the seventeenth century". It is not L.C. Knights' own examples of the language—the Labour and Conservative manifestos of 1967, for example. Certain writers of the seventeenth century, notably Shakespeare, Hooker, Marvell and Clarendon, are represented for him a degree of awareness and responsiveness to the complexities of felt experience in the handling of political themes which is rarely found in the general language of political argument and propaganda.

Professor Knights agrees with what that political language typically aims at blunting rather than stirring discriminatory response in its readers or hearers—that it tends to narrow, in Chomsky's phrase, the range of the thinkable. The partial floating-out of the nation's famous Houses of Parliament, as seen from the South Bank and Waterloo Bridge, by giant piling cases up-ended to house the Department of the Environment? Lord Kennet's advice for the plain man dealing with planners does not begin against bodies exempt from planning control. Other times, other Governments, is doubtless the political answer. What can the citizen practising democracy do about that, except vote, shout, and wait? He can improve his own architectural literacy, for one thing. This manual assumes he has such literacy, but it should not; its moves in circles that can read plan and discourse with architects, but communications between architects and the neighbours are a prime reason for misunderstandings on preservation. The advice in this book is good as far as it goes.

Although the testing of statements on the touchstones of the conscience, thought is pondering over experience, and coming to conclusion, thought is not a trick, or an exercise, or a set of dogmas, or a man in his wholeness wholly attending.

Just as Lawrence seeks to know what he does approve of by relating it with what he dis-

approves of as a denial or perversion of true thought. Professor Knights also opposes examples of what he regards as the sensitive and the insensitive in political writing.

Thus, Professor Knights finds that the constant pressure of actuality and the sense of the interplay of human relationships in Shakespeare's political plays give his audience a richer feeling for, and understanding of, the complicating involvements beneath a simple surface than does the "hard clarity"—and in other respects admirable—incisiveness of Ben Jonson. And, again, he dislikes the rhetorical generalizations of Milton's political prose because they obscure "the complex actuality of the historical moment"; whereas in Marvell's "An Horatian Ode" he finds

the swift play of mind, the precision, balance and sureness of touch, the deep but controlled feeling, the sense of the complexity of things and of the impossibility of making simple judgments of tangled and tragic situations which combine to make it "the greatest political poem in the language".

So far as Milton is concerned, it is a pity that Professor Knights did not see fit, or could not find time (his chapters are the Clark Lectures for 1971), to compare the political prose with the verse given to the fallen angels in *Paradise Lost*. The language of Satan shows Milton's maturest and deepest (perhaps because disillusioned) grasp of the language of politics: it exemplifies, and exposes from within, a discredited political rhetoric. In another part of his book Professor Knights refers to the name-calling and labelling which, he rightly says, form a part of the false coin of political debate, giving "a semblance of objective form to our projections, thereby strengthening the fears from which they spring". Zealot, Puritan, Jacobin, Commie, Agitator, Bourgeois, the Establishment, Pig, Hippie. Satan's first speech employs similar name-calling in his defiance of God to manipulate attitudes rather than define a reasonable position, and the tyranny that he accretes, like the independence he

claims, are tactical obfuscations rather than clarifications of thought.

It might be argued even that the process of narrowing the range of the thinkable to which bad political rhetoric is harnessed received dramatic embodiment in the language of Satan, and that its culmination is appropriately symbolized in the hissing anti-climax of Satan's career. If this is the case, however, it must also be said that Milton does not attempt to represent Satan as the archetypal example of complex language falling into deviousness and narrowness through rhetoric, but rather as an example of rhetoric, the means, being abused or perverted. It would not appear from *Paradise Lost* as a whole that Milton is disillusioned with rhetoric as such. What is implied is a renewal of emphasis on the primacy of inward purposes, comparable perhaps to the sober recognition of the ultimately superior "Paradise within" which Adam gains by his sin-induced suffering. No doubt the form of words reflects the soul within, but any form, even the seemingly bright, is susceptible to abuse.

This question comes up in another guise when Professor Knights, apropos a passage by Lord Digby on the attainder of Strafford, comments: "It is a strong presumption of honesty of intention when a man uses, not formal eloquence, but homely and familiar metaphors and comparisons that disperse the fog of abstract argument and sum up in a sharp phrase the actualities of the case."

One likes such writing, or speaking, perhaps, but does it really constitute "a strong presumption of honesty of intention"? Can this not also be abused as the politician's equivalent of the language of "honesty"? In politics, especially, it is dangerous to take qualities of style as an indicator of virtue.

However, it would, certainly be unfair to suggest that in this book, taken as a whole, Professor Knights is doing any such thing. What he deprecates is the abuse of language in public utterances; what he advocates is not a particular way of writing, but a tone, or perhaps even, in the end, a moral stance.

"A blend of firm conviction and tolerant openness": "a tone and temper in debate that was far removed from that of the unquestioning partisans, the fanatics and the simplifiers"; "openness to experience, the willingness not to impose a predetermined pattern on life's diversity"—this is the kind of phrase to which Professor Knights recurs again and again, indicating his characteristically liberal and humane outlook, his adherence to the tradition of Coleridge (whose remarks he is particularly fond of quoting), Arnold and Forster. As a result, this book becomes a plea for the revival of a considerate awareness and the recognition of complexity and variety of possibility in the expression of political views—a plea which is moving because Professor Knights himself employs the quietly stimulating, rather than cantankerously provocative, language of the writers he holds up for admiration. It is a classic plea for moderation. As such it is also likely to be a target, as Professor Knights is aware, for the scorn of more partisan and "committed" spirits, whether of the left or the right, and he is at pains to protest in advance that what he is advocating is not spineless indecision, or paralysis of the political will through oversensitivity to the variety of possible attitudes.

To return to Marvell's "Ode", Professor Knights argues that this poem is a particular case showing that "tension, a sense of complexity, is not incompatible with firm commitment, or, at the very least, a clear approach to commitment". And in summing up he maintains



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# TLS

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And its poetry? Yes indeed, this is the same Adrian Henri who has been mocked in these columns before now, and been published in them, too, for that matter, and whom Roy Fuller, Oxford audiences a couple of years back were told they ought to despise. I still find it difficult to understand the reaction provoked by the small, spontaneous and distinctive poetry movement which erupted on Merseyside around 1964. It was suspect to some, perhaps, for its involvement with pop music (though this began when Beatle-style music was itself still fresh) and, of course, it was

largely conceived for public delivery. Maybe its links with the visual arts were no help either, since many critics seem to feel that these belong on the other side of some kind of fence. But, even given such offences against the canons of pure private reading, it offered something positive enough to be worth helpful criticism. And this, so far as I know, is what it has never had.

Too parochial, you may say. I would have thought that this was exactly wrong: that with all its weaknesses the English pop poetry of which the Liverpoolians form part means a good deal more to the outside world (as well as to listeners to Radio One, the BBC's lowbrow service) than does, let us say, the work of Philip Larkin. For instance, I have just had the latest issue of *Ver Sacrum*, the splendidly produced arts review of the Vienna Sezession, whose president Georg Ritsler (incidentally) was once at the Manchester Municipal College of Art. Like its predecessors, it displays a strong interest in this country, with an article on Vorticists, sidelights on Wittgenstein as architect and sculptor, and, at the end, two Auden translations. But the main sample provided of English poetry is predominantly pop: Mitchell, Patten, Logue, Horowitz and so on. For better or worse, there is a foreign public which finds this kind of thing less parochial than what is approved in the metropolis, and I don't think it should be simply dismissed.

If you have ever had to talk to outsiders about our current culture—even on the "and who are your English writers?" level—you will know that our imaginative poetry and prose appear a good deal less enticing than the other arts. Foreigners tend to be most impressed by our standards of performance: by our actors and dancers, that is, and our orchestral (above all other) musicians. Artists and composers, too, from these islands command far more respect abroad than they have done for a very long time, though they are not seen as pre-eminent in the same way, at any rate not outside the field of pop music. But aside from the crime, spy, etc. writers, probably the only widely known British poet or novelist is Graham Greene: "widely" meaning beyond the world of critics, publishers, and literary specialists. The one aspect of our imaginative writing which does stimulate instant curiosity seems to be the drama.

I cannot help linking this with my own feeling that literary people are quite simply less likeable than those involved in other arts. This isn't special to Britain, of course. Writers everywhere operate on their own, in

competition with one another, with no real reason to band together except to discuss working conditions or (more rarely in this country) threats to their freedom. They are not called on to play together, rehearse together or exhibit together; nor are they ex-students of some Royal College of Writing. They share no difficult, highly skilled technique: they are seldom in two-way contact with their audience, such as it is; and at any moment some obscure housewife, brigadier, or drunken IRA man is liable to come along and beat them at their own game. Painters, certainly, can be bumptious, musicians are not free of malice, actors are a bundle of uncertainties. But these people are at the same time generous in a way that the literary world on the whole is not. And certainly one doesn't hear of psychiatrists advising their unhappy patients to take up poetry or the novel; pottery or painting or some kind of dramatic expression is what they put them on to. Writing these days is more often a symptom than a cure.

The great difference between performing artists and the rest surely lies in their professionalism. Musicians practise almost like circus performers—they are just as liable to fall off the high wire if they neglect this—while my own short experience with actors has given me an even higher regard for their conscientiousness and concentration. This obsessive perfectionism, I'm sure, can communicate itself excitingly to an inexperienced audience across all barriers of language or class: I'd send anyone, for instance, to see Denise Coffey in Ineson's *The Chairs* (which I saw at the Young Vic last week), whereas I would have to think carefully before recommending them to read a particular work. This used to be true of painters and poets, too; it could be seen, or at least sensed, that what they were doing was difficult. Unfortunately this is no longer so. Their work may get across to the lay audience as being fun; it may be in some way newsworthy or have enough curiosity value to earn a spot on the telly. But it just doesn't look all that skilled, and the language with which its creators bolster it—the talk of "systems" at the John Moores show, for instance, or the entire business of "concept art"—reads like so much flannel.

I do think this question of skill is terribly important, and I'm always ashamed of not having any myself. It could be on the lowest level, like tightrope walking indeed, as unexpectedly demonstrated in our garden by a Swiss doctor friend. Low level? Well, in one way it was low, but in the other sense there is perhaps a danger of snobbery in talking of levels here. Snooker, for instance, has some claim to be considered as an art, and so, as any artist knows, has football. The other day, in Dieppe, we saw that rare thing, a first-rate circus (organized by a French television performer called

Joan Richard) which once again convinced me how wrong the Arts Council are to consider circus beneath their notice. The Rumanian circus, Grigoresco who performed there not only a juggler and acrobat, but also a player, successfully and contentedly, of some dozen different musical instruments, I suppose may have had a horrible childhood before reaching his present virtuosity, but one has to acknowledge it as high art.

What, then, about skill in writing? The virtuoso handling of words can certainly impress readers, though it tends nowadays to make our critics suspicious. I am not in acknowledged cases like Joyce, and skill with rhyme and metre is no less exciting today than it was in the days of the great poets. But the skill of the great poets, to my mind, is not so much to make words do what they will, but to make them do what they ought to do. In the many writers nowadays seem to find it difficult to do: to tell a story in a way that can be read aloud. Though the former is a shortcoming not confined to writers: witness that much praised film *The French Connection*, where a good intelligible novel has been made almost impossible to follow by mumbling and self-indulgent direction.

When this series of—well, perhaps self-indulgent is the word here—articles was first mooted I thought it ought to deal with bedrock writing problems such as what dictionary to use and whether or not to have a recent desk lamp. Nobody seems to discuss this; interviewers writers always avoid it (the BBC handling of Evelyn Waugh used to strike me as the copybook example of how not to talk to a really good writer); and it might help to improve such skills as we have. Now that it comes to the point, what can I contribute? Only the difficulty of buying a pencil at Eton Station. Yes, pencils, not, which might check a typescript in the train. The ways of commerce are so remote from ordinary common sense these days that I hope this doesn't seem such things will in future be relegated to the art shops.

### NEXT WEEK

#### "The Power of Print"

Special articles on the impact of literacy in Africa and India by Mulk Raj Anand, Chinua Achebe, Jack Goody and T. T. Solari.

## Many Happy Returns

Arnold Hauser, who came to England in 1938 as a refugee from fascist Hungary, wrote his classic *Social History of Art* (four volumes, paper £1 each) while he was employed as a clerk in a film company. The book was rewritten in German, translated into English, and has since been translated into fifteen other languages. After the book was published, Dr Hauser received a lectureship at Leeds and a Chair at Brandeis and has since published *The Philosophy of Art History* (£4) and *Mannerism* (two vols £8 the set). He is currently writing a systematic *Sociology of Art*. His eightieth birthday is on May 8 and his publishers wish him many happy returns.

ROUTLEDGE & KEGAN PAUL

London and Boston

# Ford as others saw him



Ford Madox Ford and his daughter Christina in 1900.

For one does come to the point, at the end of a literary biography, where one asks, and properly asks: could the man recorded here have done the work that he did? This is a reasonable test of such a book, and it is a test that Mr Mizener's Scott Fitzgerald biography, the brilliant *Far Side of Paradise*, passed with high marks. But *The Saddest Story* does not pass: Mr Mizener's Ford is a blimp or a whale, a charlatan and a romantic, but he is not a great artist. One looks, from the very beginning, at the careful way which Mr Mizener is too careful to biographer to express directly, but which enters the book through the selection of details (as, for example, that when Ford had his teeth pulled in Paris, the job cost Violet Hunt eight pounds a tooth—a point that adds little to the story except the note of denigration), and through a steadily deluging commentary on Ford's remarks and behaviour ("omniscient", "disingenuous", "wholly imaginary").

It is the kind of disapproval that is evident to some degree in the recollections of most of Ford's personal acquaintances, from the mild structures of Wells to the contempt of Hemingway, but it is unfortunate

in what will be the standard biography for years to come. One cannot help regretting that Mr Mizener did not take more to heart the wise and generous remark of Stella Bowen, which he quotes as an epigraph:

Ford's weakness of character, unfairness, disregard of truth, and vanity must be accepted. . . . On the other hand, his tenderness, understanding, wisdom (about anything that didn't apply to himself) and the tremendous attraction of his gorgeous mind, must make him always regretted.

The decision to set the record straight in detail has committed Mr

Mizener to a close-up relation to his subject. This is a legitimate option for a biographer, but it deprives the reader of the treatment of literary and social history that is the other option. Before the First World War, for example, Ford was an interesting case of an Edwardian Man of Letters: in the years between 1913 and 1928 he was writing in, and presumably thinking about, the modern tradition of fictional form; in the 1920s he was among the Paris expatriates; during the 1930s he was in New York. In all of these instances Ford's life has a significance that is historical as well as personal, and that cannot be discovered by treating Ford merely as an individual eccentric with a distaste for the truth.

Another kind of significance lies in the growth and quality of Ford's thought. Ford considered himself in his earlier years to be a man without ideas, and this is a fairly accurate assessment; but in his later life he thought a good deal about Western culture and politics, and the best of his books from the First World War on could justly be described as books of ideas. The ideas were often eccentric, and almost always out of step with the times, but nevertheless one ought not to dismiss books like *Providence* and *Great Trade Route* as "simply the play of an ingenious fancy". In their odd individuality, they represent a significant line of modern thought—what one might call literary Ludism—that is worth attending to.

They are also marvellously entertaining, as Ford always was when he was speaking in his own voice. An excellent case could be made for the proposition that Ford was the best memoir-writer of his time—the liveliest, the most illuminating (in his impressionistic way), and the most complex. But no one has made that case yet. Among the many critical books on Ford that have appeared in recent years, tidied-up American dissertations, most of them—none has yet taken Ford's memoirs and meditations seriously enough as writing. No one has yet come forward to assert that *Providence* is a great work of English prose, or to observe that *Joseph Conrad* is a cunning example of the theories of fiction that it formulates, or that the structure of *Return to Yesterday* is intricate and beautiful. In any age but this one, such fine, composed writing would be taken seriously. But, ironically, the very war that Ford waged to have the English novel treated as high art has robbed his non-fictional prose of its proper glory.

As evidence of this sorry state of affairs, consider the latest volume in the Bodley Head Ford. It is called *Memories and Impressions*, a title that Ford had used for the American edition of his first book of selections, here used to cover a selection of bits and pieces from seven of Ford's eight volumes of personal reminiscences. These fragments, some less than a page long and few of more than a dozen pages, are arranged in roughly chronological sequence, a fact that would have depressed Ford profoundly, as it will depress anyone who cares for the intricacy of Ford's original time-shifting. Nor is this all. "In order to accomplish this," the editor blandly explains, "I have occasionally had to reconstruct sentences or the beginning or end of a paragraph." A most unfeeling way to treat an old man mad about writing. The anecdotes remain, and the expansive, agreeable personality, but the juxtapositions and "modulations" of that extraordinary mind are lost. The editor explains that his text was "not edited for scholars, as though that disclaimer permitted him every liberty; in fact, it is not edited for anyone who takes Ford's writing seriously." An arrangement like this might do for *The Selected Anecdotes of Elton Glyn*, or *Moments with Hugh Walpole*, but it will not do for the serious work of a major English novelist.

When Ford was not being a novelist, an editor, or a small producer, he was sometimes being a

## The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame D'Arblay)

Edited by  
Joyce Hemlow  
and others

Volume I: 1791-1792

Volume II: 1793

The manuscripts of the letters and journals of Fanny Burney, for a century inaccessible to scholars, are now being edited by Joyce Hemlow, Greenfield Professor of English at McGill University, and others. Volume I of this edition includes many new letters. Volume II is largely the story of Fanny Burney's courtship and marriage, and reads like an epistolary novel of the period. Two volumes £3.25 each.

## The New Zealand Anthony Trollope

Edited by  
John N. Hall

Written in 1855-6 but never before published, *The New Zealander* contains Trollope's views on nearly every aspect of English life, and as such can be regarded as the seed bed for much of his fiction. Apart from his interest in readers of Trollope, the book merits attention as a Victorian England by a writer of the highest stature. Frontispiece 8 plates £3

## What Coleridge Thought

Owen Barfield

Coleridge's many and varied prose works are physically dispersed and also reveal immense complexity of thought: a formidable challenge to any scholar. After years of sympathetic reading and thinking, Mr Barfield presents Coleridge's ideas in coherent form, carefully organized to demonstrate precisely what his ideas were and how they developed. £3.70

## Human Understanding:

Volume I  
Stephen Toulmin

The three volumes of *Human Understanding* will discuss the collective use and evaluation of concepts, the development and use of conceptual capacities by individuals, and the standards for judging the intellectual claims of concepts. In the first volume, Stephen Toulmin attacks the problems of conceptual change where Frege, Collingwood, and Kuhn leave off. 312 figures £4.75

## Patterns of Foreign Influence in the Caribbean

Edited by  
Emanuel de Kadt

This symposium discusses the effects of external influence on some of the countries of the Caribbean—Cuba, Guianella, Guyana, Jamaica, the French and Dutch Antilles, and Surinam. It explores the effects of these nations' dependence on more powerful countries, and the implications of the strategic importance that the region has had in the eyes of successive U.S. governments as well as for U.S. economic interests. Map £3.50. Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Oxford  
University  
Press











# Blooms and butchery in a Japanese garden

LOUIS FREDERIC:

Japan's Art and Civilization  
503pp including 430 plates. Thames  
and Hudson. £10.50.

As I Crossed A Bridge Of Dreams  
Recollections of a Woman in  
Eleventh-Century Japan.

Translated from the Japanese by Ivan  
Morris

159pp. Oxford University Press.  
£4.50.

H. PAUL VARLEY:

Imperial Restoration in Medieval  
Japan.

222pp. Columbia University Press.  
£3.80.

SIMA ELIOVSON:

Gardening the Japanese Way

216pp including 159 illustrations.  
Harper. £8.50.

Japanese civilization must be seen as  
an integral whole. Japanese literature  
is difficult enough to understand with-  
out a considerable knowledge of its  
background. Japanese works of art  
are like fish out of water when taken  
from their setting. Even Japanese  
food needs the correct room, utensils,  
picture, view and service.

Unfortunately the elements that  
compose the Japanese background are  
not yet a part of our general  
knowledge of the world, and for  
Eastern history is taught to us  
scarcely at all. These considerations  
impose a great burden on all those  
writing about Japan. Out of a vast  
volume of material it is extremely  
important to select the relevant issues  
and avoid becoming bogged down in  
detail, interesting in itself, but not  
pertinent to a European's understand-  
ing of the whole.

Isolation may well be the key to  
most of Japan's peculiarities. Louis  
Frederic has written fascinatingly  
about the early history of Japan and  
pointed out the diverse elements that  
made it up. The salient fact, how-  
ever, is that from the third century  
AD Japanese society began to form  
that homogeneous whole which it  
presents to the world today, and that,  
despite the vast Chinese contribution,  
it developed in relative seclusion. The  
length of its history has given it a  
special flavour of its own and an  
almost abnormal sense of cohesive-  
ness.

Whatever the original religious in-  
fluences of the Japanese may have  
been—and on this again Mr  
Frederic is extremely interesting—  
Shinto became the birthright of every  
Japanese. An understanding of it is  
basic to any attempt to study Japanese  
achievements in any sphere. Mr

Frederic describes it as a sort of  
mythical-religious syncretism with  
shamanist influence. He rightly  
points out that there is no equivalent  
in Shinto to the Western conception  
of God. There are only the myriad  
kami—or spirits of people and things  
who live between heaven and earth  
and descend temporarily into objects  
in the shrines or into the trees or  
rocks.

He finds Shinto impossible to de-  
fine, rightly, since it possesses neither  
a theology nor a system of ethics, but  
he concludes that it is the very justifi-  
cation of existence for the Japanese  
people: a person is Shinto in the  
same way that he is Japanese. Shinto  
does not demand faith. The kami are  
not prayed to, merely venerated.

They are the primordial pure beings,  
the models to be emulated, the guides  
of individuals as well as of the nation.  
Shinto sees the divine as immanent  
and attributes to the race and people  
divine origins. It swamped earlier  
beliefs and became the principal sup-  
port of the Yamato race and their  
leader, the Emperor, who was con-  
sidered to be a "manifest kami".  
These basic beliefs were so simple  
that the Japanese were able to graft  
on to them the whole complicated  
Buddhist system—admirably ex-  
plained in its essentials in Mr  
Frederic's volume—as well as Con-  
fucian morality and, now, much of  
the alien structure (if not the thought)  
of European culture. It is the cement  
which binds Japan together still.

Shinto dealt with the business of  
living; Buddhism with the more prob-  
lematical hereafter. Life was seen to  
be an illusion; escape through detach-  
ment was its goal. Later the typical  
Japanese development—initiated by  
Honen Shonin—of salvation by faith  
without intellectual inquiry became  
the popular Buddhist creed. Faith  
alone brought immediate entry into  
the Western Paradise of Amida.  
Buddhism brought Japan into com-  
munion with the Indian and Chinese  
worlds and supplied a touch of the  
transcendent utterly lacking in Shinto  
itself.

Then came Zen, a Chinese  
Buddhist sect of Indian origin, tinged  
with Taoism, which fitted in beauti-  
fully with Japanese traditional think-  
ing. Shinto had inspired a feeling of  
harmony with the universe, which  
Zen elaborated. Shinto had not  
postulated intellectual activity. Zen  
taught that enlightenment could come  
only through a flash of intuition  
(bliss to an unspontaneous society)  
and that in its attainment the intellect  
was a hindrance. By meditation the  
true self could be known and also its  
position in the universe, but this had  
to be felt and not thought. Renitence  
and understatement were the charac-

teristics of its taste: evocative im-  
pressionism was its style.

Mr Frederic, in his admirable  
account of Japanese history, touches  
illuminatingly on all these vital points.  
But enthusiasm for the Japanese  
achievement is somehow not con-  
veyed by the pages of his book, still  
less by the illustrations, compre-  
hensive though they are. Contemporary  
Japan produces reproductions of  
astonishing fidelity and beauty. These  
have been excused and the effect of  
the photographs is that given by  
books of some half century ago.

Curiously enough, Ivan Morris  
also chooses illustrations quite un-  
worthy of his subject and of his own  
skill in translation and evocation.  
The Lady from Sarashina is as deli-  
cate a work as any in literature—  
her very identity is in doubt. She  
reveals next to nothing about her-  
self, nor of the mundane matters that  
must have preoccupied her. The  
landscape she describes is romanti-  
cally enigmatic, full of yearning for  
the unattainable, but classically por-  
trayed by the Kano school of decor-  
ative, limited glimpses of mundane  
life between the billowing gold  
clouds. Sometimes the mist part a  
little and she lets us see vignettes of  
life—hers they dream or reality?  
such as her father's departure or her  
son on horseback. Yet somehow the  
lady's retiring personality and exqui-  
site sensibility emerge in strange  
clarity from her gossamer prose.

She exudes the perfume of the  
Heian period, when Kyoto was far  
more to the Japanese than Paris to  
the French. Only in Kyoto did civil-  
ization dwell. To be sent outside  
it, even for a small distance, was  
an appalling banishment. To live in it,  
even as a minor official, was to partake  
of perfection in this world. The  
sensibilities were cultivated as per-  
haps never before or since.

Yet its absorption in itself was its  
undoing. The country had to be  
governed. If the court and the  
nobility were occupied in the com-  
position of poems and the evolving of  
ever more complicated ceremonies,  
others would grasp the power. What  
they did with it Mr Frederic tells.

Although so ethereal that to enter  
it at all is to cross a bridge of dreams,  
in a curious way the Heian world was  
more in harmony with what the rest  
of the world knew than subsequent  
periods in Japan. Their houses were  
more of the Chinese order of things;  
their gardens more robust; their love  
of flowers and colour more  
exuberant. They admitted her-  
baceous plants and even annuals to  
their gardens (heresy in later times).  
The tree peony and the campanu-

like *platyodon grandiflora* they pre-  
ferred, and these, though gaudy, are  
still permitted in classical gardens  
(though discreetly placed).

The aftermath of Heian aestheti-  
cism and the growth of military feudal  
society lie behind the Imperial res-  
toration in medieval Japan—here  
most scholarly presented by H. Paul  
Varley. This is itself a fascinating  
essay on the period when the Japa-  
nese imperial institution was split in  
two. The handling of this in educa-  
tion in the nineteenth and twentieth  
centuries forms the most illuminating  
part of this volume for the European  
reader. What was a commonplace  
situation in Europe and elsewhere in  
the world was at the time shocking  
enough in Japan and unthinkable to  
the emperor-centric state as it de-  
veloped before the war.

The actual historical details are  
therefore less interesting than their  
subsequent treatment. That there  
should be two emperors reigning at  
once and that the scion of the  
southern dynasty, the Emperor  
Godogu, should try to rule in name  
as well as in theory seem self-evident  
to a Western reader.

It was during the middle ages, when  
this interlude occurred, that most of  
the outward characteristics of Japa-  
nese subsequent civilization developed.  
Turbulence could not quench refined  
aesthetics. That typical product,  
the garden, was evolved, and is here  
charmingly extolled in *Gardening the  
Japanese Way*.

The Japanese have always external-  
ized their philosophy and tried to  
live it rather than write it. Thus the  
traditional Japanese house, particu-  
larly as it developed after Zen taste  
had moulded it, embodied most of the  
Japanese outlook on life in its very  
construction. Harmony with nature  
was evinced by the choice of raw  
materials. The pillar by the sacred  
alcove (*tokonoma*) should be as little  
touched by man as possible and show  
the natural shape and characteristics  
of the tree from which it was hewn.

The woodwork should be of a natural  
colour and the house as a whole  
should blend harmoniously into its  
landscape. It should be placed  
athwart the garden, which should  
carry on irrespective of the existence  
of the house. Its stepping-stones and  
ponds would continue underneath  
the house itself to emphasize this.

The garden was largely to be seen  
as a picture from the house. A great  
artist would in later times design this  
picture. It was the duty of the  
occupant to keep it exactly as it had  
been created. If a tree died, it should  
be replaced by one as near in shape  
to its predecessor as possible. Innova-  
tions, additions and even natural

growth were to be eschewed  
eliminated.

The outer walls of the Japa-  
nese house came to slide away into  
the summer and could be removed  
diaphanous blinds or reed shades  
which let the wind through. The  
garden was essential; men lived so  
close to nature and to the seasons.

With no heating other than a  
coul brazier in a pot (*hibachi*)  
sunk into the floor with a table  
it (*tokotatsu*), life in the winter  
was rigorous. The coming of  
brought joy and light when the  
house could be opened. The summer  
enabled the inmates to live  
in the open air. Every facet  
of every season therefore was  
with delight, and gardening was  
an adjunct but an integral part  
of living.

Space was always at a premium  
and the maximum was made of  
every corner. The stunted  
arose from the desire of those  
out space to enjoy a real tree  
perfect in every proportion. It brought  
the mountain air into their confined  
existence. False perspective  
vistas: the "borrowed landscape"  
of the surrounding hills added  
infinite dimensions to a tiny plot.

It is the great merit of Sima Elio-  
vson's book that she has the ability  
—and the gardening experience—  
to be able to explain how others  
can achieve this in their own  
media. Hers is essentially a practical  
book, which therefore complements  
Lorraine Kuck's classic interpreta-  
tion, *The World of the Japanese Gar-  
den*, with the information required  
by those anxious to emulate the  
secret paradises they may have seen  
in the temples in Kyoto.

Mr Frederic gives the structure  
of Japanese history and tradition.  
Professor Morris shows an enthu-  
siasm escape into a poetic dream-  
tinged with melancholy, possible  
only to privileged ladies of the  
Heian period; Mr Varley gives a  
glimpse of harsh reality in the  
Japanese middle ages; and Ms  
Eliovson helps us to take points from  
that great Japanese achievement, the  
garden in the confined space. All  
serve to supply that background  
which students of Japan need.

To bring the Japanese achievement  
readily to life, recourse should be had  
by publishers to the achievements of  
contemporary Japanese colour  
photography. Miss Eliovson's illu-  
stration are good; Mr Frederic's  
diagrams excellent. If all the illu-  
strations were up to the same standard,  
these books would rejoice the eye,  
as well as inform the mind.

# SOMETHING NEW OUT OF AFRICA?

« J'habite ici tout seul, fit-il d'un air triste et un peu guindé,  
ma femme est morte. (Il craqua une allumette, introduisit la  
flamme dans une lampe à pétrole, et des murs blancs montèrent  
autour d'eux.) Prenez des oranges pendant que j'allume les autres  
lampes. »

Il s'agenouilla auprès de quatre autres appareils, et les douces  
flammes crépitèrent au bout de son allumette, avec un sifflement.  
« C'est pas mal chez vous, susura effrontément Awa. Ce  
que vous en avez, des livres !

— Ce sont tous ceux que j'ai écrits, mentit l'administrateur.  
— Ce doit être merveilleux d'écrire.

— On tente de dire quelque chose. Euh... Aimeriez-vous vis-  
ter la maison ? Elle est d'excellent goût, n'est-ce pas ? Naturel-  
lement, ajouta Chevalier baissant la voix, il y manque le cachet  
féminin. »

Puis, évoluant de pièce en pièce, l'administrateur alluma les  
lampes ; et partout où il entrait, surgissaient — sentinelles au  
garde-à-vous : panneaux blancs, peintures sur verre, murs crème,  
plafonds vert de jade pâle...

L'homme poursuivait son chemin à pas menus, ne signalant  
rien à l'attention de Awa, comme s'il eût désiré faire de cette  
femme, l'humble gardienne de ses trésors. Sa tête se penchait,  
comme pour murmurer le désir qu'il avait de garder pour lui la  
coursane, si belle, et l'orgueil que lui causait la perfection de  
son propre goût.

« Ma chambre à coucher », dit-il, s'effaçant devant une porte  
rose, et promenant une lampe.

Awa eut le souffle coupé par le plaisir que provoquèrent en  
elle les tentures roses, le lit en demi-cercle, la courtoise en  
soie, que l'on eût juré jonchée de pétales de roses.

— Oh ! dit-elle, apercevant une glace aux reflets profonds,  
qui la flattait mieux que tout homme aux paroles doucereuses.  
Aôôô ! gloussa-t-elle, à la vue du seul tableau accroché au mur.  
Comme elle est jolie ! Qui est-ce ?

— Ma femme, répondit Chevalier, sans la regarder.

Le portrait était juste face au lit. C'était le premier visage  
qui le frappait au réveil. Ce visage lui disait bonjour le matin, lui  
faisait don de sa beauté, de sa malignité, de sa vertu.

« Comme vous avez dû l'aimer ! hasarda Awa, fascinée par  
ce visage. »

Et pendant un moment, Chevalier eut envie de lui crier la  
vérité : que sa femme était là non parce qu'il l'adorait, mais parce  
que le tableau ne pouvait être ailleurs, parce qu'il lui rappelait  
l'unique créature qui avait lui clair en lui.

« Venez, que je vous montre la cuisine », se dépêcha-t-il  
d'ajouter.

La cuisine évoquait un paysage de rêve, avec ses fenêtres blan-  
ches, son buffet blanc, son ensemble blanc, son four à charbon  
émaillé, ses murs et son plafond bleu pastel.

Par l'écartement des rideaux, Awa aperçut, dans la maison  
voisine, qui se brossait les cheveux, une splendide négresse, nue,  
devant un miroir : un vaste lit à deux personnes attendait ses  
abonnés. Une ordonnance mettait la table pour le petit déjeuner  
du lendemain ; ailleurs, le capitaine Vandame écrivait, devant  
un caporal au garde-à-vous.

« Ils font tous quelque chose de différent », murmura-t-elle,  
cependant que son regard revenait au grand lit, et ses pensées  
vers la courtoise rose, dans la chambre de Chevalier, puis  
vers Saïf.

(*Le Devoir de Violence*, Editions du Seuil, 1968, pages 68-69.)

'I live all alone here,' Mr Surrogate said, a little stiffly and  
sadly, 'my wife is dead.' He switched on a light and the white  
walls rose round him. 'Have a nut while I light the fire?' He  
knelt and the gentle hissing flames sprang from his match-  
end.

'It's lovely here,' Kay Rimmer said. 'What a lot of books  
you have.'

'Those are my own,' Mr Surrogate said.

'It must be wonderful to write.'

'One tries to exert an influence. Would you like to see the  
flat? It's small, but choice, I think. Of course,' Mr Surrogate  
added with lowered respectful voice, 'it lacks the female  
touch. A man's den.' But the word den was a shocking mis-  
nomer; Mr Surrogate went from room to room switching on  
the lights, and everywhere he went white panelling, cream  
walls, pale jade walls sprang, like sentries, to attention.

Mr Surrogate padded ahead, switching on the lights; he drew atten-  
tion to nothing; with his smooth blond head deprecatingly  
bent he might have been the humble custodian of his treas-  
ures; no one could have guessed the fierce smothered pride  
which bowed his head in recognition of his own perfect  
taste.

'My bedroom,' he said a little drily, opening a pink door,  
turning on several lights. Kay Rimmer gave a gasp of  
pleasure at the rose hangings, the semi-circular bed, the silk  
bedspread like a waste of fallen petals.

'Oh,' she said, catching sight of the great mirror with its  
deep reflections, which flattered her more than a soft-spoken  
man. 'Oh,' she said again at sight of the only picture on the  
walls, 'how lovely. Who's that?'

Mr Surrogate answered without looking: 'My wife.' It  
faced the bed. It was the first face he saw in the morning. It  
greeted him, before Davis, with its beauty and its malice and  
its integrity.

'How you must have loved her,' Kay Rimmer said softly,  
under the spell of the face, and for a moment Mr Surrogate  
longed to tell the truth, that it was hung there as an atone-  
ment for his dislike, as a satisfaction for his humility, be-  
cause of its reminder of the one woman who had never  
failed to see through him. 'Let me show you the kitchen,' he  
said quickly.

The kitchen was like a snowdrift with its white casement  
and white dresser and white table and enameled gas stove  
and its deep blue walls and ceiling.

Through the chink of the curtains on a top floor she saw a  
woman brushing her hair; a great double bed waited for its  
inhabitants; a maid laid breakfast; a man wrote letters; a  
chauffeur lent from the window of a little flat above a garage,  
and smoked his last pipe.

'Everyone's doing something different,' she said, her eyes  
going back to the double bed and her thoughts on the pink  
bedspread in the other room and Jules and half a loaf is  
better than no bread and the lovely dead indifferent woman  
on the wall.

(*It's a Battlefield*, Heinemann, 1934, pages 56-58.)

# Corpses and their Indian context

GEOFFREY MOORHOUSE:

Calcutta  
376pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.  
£4.50.

LASSE AND LISA BERG:

Face to Face: Fascism and Revolu-  
tion in India

Translated by Norman Kurita.  
240pp. Berkeley, California: Ram-  
part Press. \$5.95.

Both these books include photographs  
of corpses, but the context of the  
illustration is different in each,  
reflecting different qualities in the  
books. Mr Moorhouse's corpse is  
merely a corpse; "a floppy, almost  
rubberized thing, which by some  
mysterious chemistry has been  
bleached almost totally white, from  
head to toe." The Bergs' photo-  
graph is more like a charnel house,  
the result of this recent incident.

In Kilavenmani, the casteless farm-  
workers tried to organize themselves,  
demanding their portion of the lu-  
creased production. In revenge, the  
wealthy landowners in the area marched  
to the village, "screed" away the men,  
drove the women and children into a  
hut, poured kerosene on it and burned  
forty-four people to death.

The Bergs put their horrors into a

political context; Mr Moorhouse  
does not.

Mr Moorhouse does however—  
and this is the great success of his  
book—place the enormity of what  
Calcutta is today in its historical  
context. He follows the fortunes of  
Calcutta from its founding by the  
British. ("Nothing but commercial  
greed could possibly have led to  
such an idiotic [choice of site],"  
through the three centuries of the  
British period, and the quarter-cen-  
tury of independence. And he looks,  
glumly, into the immediate future.  
There he sees only two alternatives:  
a general act-of-human-self-destruc-  
tion in the city, started perhaps by  
some plague on a medieval scale;  
"while some people are counting  
their many piles of dead; others will  
have become so maddened by their  
loss and by their fury at the fate  
that they will set out to destroy  
with axes, with knives, with  
bombs, with pistols, with axes and  
bare hands." Or a more selective  
Moorhouse imagines the signal  
that they will be given by the rich  
people around Calcutta like animals  
all their lives.

Before he reaches this grim vision  
of a black and rather pointless

cataclysm, Mr Moorhouse has  
looked down "the road to revolu-  
tion," but seems to think that it is a  
dead end. It looks rather different  
from the Bergs' account.

Lasse and Lisa Berg are Swedish  
journalists who travelled widely in  
India in 1968 and 1969, concentrat-  
ing their inquiries on the agrarian  
situation and what appeared to them  
to be emergent revolutionary pres-  
sures. A good part of their book is  
in direct speech, taken from the  
interviews they conducted on their  
travels; they back up these sections  
with summaries of the social and  
economic factors involved, and the  
blue is justified in claiming that  
through this "mosaic approach"  
they present a comprehensive view  
of the Indian scene.

The Bergs' prose is cold, but  
precise, and this again contrasts  
sharply with Mr Moorhouse, whose  
prose is rich and looser. Of course,  
the Bergs spent most of their time in  
the poorest rural areas; there,  
"everything is alive, but even so  
everything seems completely quiet. A  
heavy fatigue rests upon the land; the  
people have slept poorly on the cold  
night ground, most are hungry and  
sick, thin, dim looking, deep coughs,  
this limbo and frozen skin, slow  
movement."  
— eastern Uttar Pradesh, a railway

station on a winter morning, where  
"there seems to be no border be-  
tween life and death." It is very  
different in Calcutta, where, as Mr  
Moorhouse writes, life "pulsates and  
churns... awakes in every direc-  
tion." It is reproducing itself  
minute by minute, it is thriving  
proudly and brandishing itself. It  
dominates.

The Bergs concentrate on the  
poorest sections of the rural society,  
which makes up about 70 per cent of  
the population, and whose numbers  
are increasing not only through  
population growth but also as a  
result of the agricultural techniques  
mis-labelled "the green revolution".  
It is to these people that the Maoist  
communists are taking their message  
of revolution; "the peasants must  
rise and arm themselves, organize  
guerrilla groups, create liberated  
areas, and gradually build a people's  
army." Other communists the Bergs  
quote argue that this is adventurism,  
warning that the power and mobility  
of the state is such that attempts to  
follow the Chinese path are fore-  
doomed. Certainly, no answer has so  
far even begun to emerge in India,  
but the sense of growing tension, of  
peasant discontent beginning at last  
to make itself felt, coming strongly  
through the Bergs' account.

In their view, it is already plain  
that "Indira Gandhi and her Con-  
gress party will not be able to solve  
India's problems": because "the  
people who support the party belong  
to the class whose privileges must be  
stripped away". Others might be  
inclined to give Mrs Gandhi more  
time before being so categorical. But  
the Bergs' *Face to Face* may mean  
to be for India's 1970s what  
Kusum Nayyar's *Blossoms in the  
Dust* was for the 1960s: a percep-  
tive leap, expressed through literary  
journalism, prefiguring  
approaching political phase.  
Nayar's report of village conditions  
and attitudes punctured the rosy  
expectations of those who believed  
that a rising tide of expectations was  
sweeping through the rural areas.  
pointed, instead, to a sluggish con-  
tinent, resisting change. The Bergs  
look beyond that, to the develop-  
ment of tensions and hostilities in  
the villages that may passage  
revolutionary developments.

In contrast, there is inevitably  
something static in Mr Moorhouse's  
portrait of Calcutta. But it is not  
engrossing. He writes vividly, but he  
misses nothing, he has experienced  
and owned (apparently fleeting) the  
of the city with solid reality. As  
portraits of a city it could hardly be  
bettered.

TEXT REPRODUCED ON THE LEFT COME  
from a novel by a Malian writer first  
published in Paris in 1968; the text on  
the right, which anyone could conclude was a  
stylized version of the same passages,  
came from a novel first published by Graham  
Greene in 1934. In order to make it  
possible to compare the French with the  
English, we have made a few excisions from  
the French text, which are marked with dots.  
The two versions are continuous and  
complete within three pages of the  
original text of the books.  
The French text is M. Oulougou's novel

won one of the more meaningful of Paris's  
literary prizes, the Renaudot, and was,  
patronizingly and predictably, extolled as  
evidence of francophone Africa's growing  
literary vitality. Last year Ralph Manheim's  
English translation of the novel was published  
here and in America, as *Bound to Violence*.  
The author himself lent a hand in the  
promotion of this translation in the United  
States, and was reportedly emphatic about  
his novel's "authenticity" declaring on  
television that he "wrote this book in French  
but followed the traditional African rhythms  
and the spirit of the African past". It

presumably says something for Graham  
Greene that, even before he went to a con-  
fident that later much concerned him, he was  
capable of effortlessly conveying its tradi-  
tional rhythms.

The asserted African-ness of *Le Devoir  
de Violence* has recently, as it happens, been  
challenged elsewhere. In a journal published  
by the African and Afro Research Institute at  
the University of Texas, *Research in African  
Literatures* (Vol. 2, No. 2, pp 117-120). Here,  
Eric Selin reports the opinion of a well-  
informed friend of his that M. Oulougou's  
novel is indebted in some places to an  
earlier French novel, *Le Dernier des Justes*  
by André Schwarz-Bart, published by the  
same firm in 1959 and a winner of the  
Goncourt Prize. Mr Selin's source suggested  
that the publisher may even have com-  
missioned *Le Devoir de Violence*—perfectly  
legitimately—as an African variant of M.  
Schwarz-Bart's best seller.

On its appearance in the United States,  
*Bound to Violence* was trumpeted as the  
"first truly African novel", a claim which  
now looks more than a little sick. Or, is  
M. Oulougou on to something: a style of  
literary imperialism intended as a revenge  
for the much-chronicled sins of territorial  
imperialists?



## Shattering

ALAN BURNS:  
*Dreamerika!*  
144pp. Calder and Hoyars. £2.50.  
ANN QUINN:  
*Tripticks*  
192pp. Calder and Hoyars. £2.25.

The jacket describes Alan Burns's fourth novel as a continuation of his search for a fragmented form that reflects society's disintegration. This means that he has interspersed his text with headlines, cartoons, and photographs clipped from newspapers, all reproduced with their various type-faces and thick and thin of ink, and forming a running commentary vaguely relevant to his subject. Only a vague relevance is possible, for *Dreamerika!* is the history of the Kennedy family told in a torrent of fantasy and surrealism, with occasional stepping-stones of fact, or what we have been told is fact.

It has occasional charm. The technique strikes sparks in some of the juxtapositions of the headline-collage, sometimes because it is genuinely an ironic observation, sometimes because the device triggers something answering in the reader's psyche, an experience to be had from random scraps on random walls, and no thanks to Mr Burns. There is more to be got from the text, where a talented savagery is always lurking: Joe bought Boston for his son, silver banners appeared each evening, luxury was used extensively: every person knew that bright-eyed Jack was Jack.

"I've tasted well, a mother must have stamina," Rose, in her eighteenth year, smoothed down her fashionable dress... settled her serviette beneath her chin, relishing every minute of it: "I can't imagine why I talk so much, my boys tell me it's my habit," putting her bluntly down her. "On the subject of death, it's disconcerting when a boy is killed, very stupid if I may say so. I've had a happy and satisfying life, I think death is a great stimulant, physical action of some sort, I know he died a shocking death, I thought about it for hours, what little exhausted at the end, I had to go to bed and rest. Bed has

## Eat up

HANS J. FRÖHLICH:  
*Engels Kopf*  
339pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. DM18.

"Autocannibalism. In fact you can, without endangering your own life, enjoy yourself, in smallish portions." Peschek, in Turin supposedly to write a guide to the city, invites the reader to witness this feat of gastronomic acrobatics in a long, discordant and unidly novel that seems to delight in irritating rather than stimulating, with a dizzying parade of gimmickry and virtuosity which aspires towards the new but which somehow often sounds tired and secondhand.

Peschek is eating his heart out in search of reality, yet the cycle of the everyday offers only a dead repetitive blur.

What is so infuriating about this novel is that nothing happens. It rains, the sun shines, the sky clouds over, a storm, but nothing happens. Reality is like Turin. Change is its

## LITERATURE and IDEOLOGY

ISSUE No. 11: Literature for an independent Canada, Marxism and terrorism in American culture, British "working class" fiction, LeRoi Jones, the case against Noam Chomsky and Skinner, and developing socialist literature and art.

Annual \$3.00; single 8.75. The National Publications Centre, Box 747, Adelaide St., Toronto 1, Can.

always been one of my greatest pleasures, it's not nice to think on the gloomy side, but what can you do? She had a high voice and patent leather shoes. "Life's rather dull nowadays, I've bored a lot."

"The whole tribe, and America itself, take this sort of hammering: not very novel targets either of them. The undeniable interest of this bitter and cruel book is in its very ferocity, so vigorous that even the typographical irritations are overwhelmed."

*Tripticks* is dedicated to Alan Burns, and like his own novel, published at the same time by the same publisher, attacks American society with ridicule, and runs a thread of narrative through jumbled and flickering episodes. Where *Dreamerika!* is illustrated with newspaper collage, *Tripticks* has comic-book style illustrations, some mildly erotic, scattered in its pages, and only more or less relevant to its text. The plot, so far as one is allowed access to it, concerns a narrator being chased across America by a "No. 1 X-wife" and hiding from an all-powerful, all-consuming lyccon father-in-law, a mother-in-law who loves her poodle best, three other wild, confused and confusing X-wives, some aunts, and someone called the Nighttripper.

Not that the plot has anything to do with it. The point seems to be to remark on a shattered society with a splintered art-form (*again*?). and the regulations at the moment seem to require America to be the proper setting for this. The technique, which must be even more laborious to employ than it is to interpret, cannot perform what it aims at. The thing is still physically a book, we must still turn over its pages, we still have to remember from one page to the next what has accumulated. The effort of doing so through the thickets of frustration that the method and layout impose is too much, and drags fatal attention to the powerful underlying humourlessness of the whole thing. Bile and a certain peculiar pathos enliven Alan Burns's work, in consequence of his wit: there are no such rewards with Ann Quinn.

essence, but Peschek is trying to "fix" it. Reality is also like the elusive Gina, the half-faithful Italian girl he becomes involved with:

So what is Gina: a child, an apparition, a make of car, an impossibility, the projection of some fear? Some of the time she is everything at once, then again she is a surrogate for something beyond our grasp.

To try to capture this unattainable reality, Hans Fröhlich spares no means: every conceivable "experimental" technique is employed: concrete poetry, seven pages of introspection without a full-stop, word-play, sudden reversals of style, ingenious imagery—all capped by long closing section in which footnotes slowly strangle the text like an Arden Shakespeare.

A kind of framework is offered in the pattern of sections, but within each section, the only restraint upon length and intensity is the writer's whim. The flashes of wit and inventiveness amuse, but they cannot shape nor sustain the novel. Critics of his previous, much more purposeful, *Tendelkeller* (1967) applauded Fröhlich's giftedness and deplored his indiscipline. Regrettably, the situation has altered little.

EATRICK MODIANO:  
*Night Rounds*  
Translated by Patricia Wolf.  
115pp. Gollancz. £1.50.

French title: *La Ronde de nuit*. The second novel of one of the most gifted of French Post-war writers, and a nicely malicious hatchet-job on the "legends and the literature" of the German Occupation of France. The novel can best be read as Modiano's waspish metaphor for his own difficulties in responding to the immediate past, with its now unreal police of identity and heroism (TLS, December 4, 1969). The translation is very competent.

## Fields of Russia

VLADIMIR SOLOUKHIN:  
*White Grass*  
Translated by Margaret Wetlin.  
264pp. Moscow: Progress Publishers.  
London: Central Books. Paperback, 30p.

LEONID ZHUKHOVITSKY:  
*Astride a Dolphin*  
Translated by Katherine Judelson.  
329pp. Moscow: Progress Publishers.  
London: Central Books. Paperback, 60p.

Russia so lacks scenery that foreigners overlook the fact that its countryside is probably the most unspoiled, the most un-DDT'd, the nearest to nature of any in Europe. Cornflowers and poppies cover the harvest fields, a few miles outside Moscow there are sheets of wild lily of the valley in June, and the unpolluted lakes and streams are full of water-lilies.

Vladimir Soloukhin is Russia's acknowledged poet—or prose-poet—of nature now that Prishvin and Pasternak are gone. He is a less gifted writer than either of them, but his loving, unsentimental record of his walks in the Vladimir province and his expeditions in search of icons or mushrooms have added a great deal to our picture of Russia. He is recommended in the Soviet introduction to *White Grass* as a man who has a house in the village where he was born—"not a bought house, but a house handed down to him from his forebears"—and it is the Russia of his forebears, and its continued presence today, that is Soloukhin's main theme.

The present collection, however, though it includes a few village stories, consists mostly of sketches on other aspects of Soviet life: they are about hungry boys during the war, or dancing lessons in a provincial town, or a wet day at a fashionable seaside resort. Soloukhin was once a reporter for *Ogoniok*, and he knows how to give some of his sketches the typically Soviet moralistic twist; but he is so open a story has been composed purely for the sake of the twist. He is straightforward and convincing when he writes about "the girls in Pushkin Park who will crawl into the bushes with you," or "the Sunday drinking bouts which usually end in a fight," or the boys who compete,

without anger, to settle the precedence of strength, or the old woman's heartfelt appeal to the Virgin to intercede for her son killed by a train. The simplicity and spontaneity of this last episode remind one of Gorky's reminiscences. Soloukhin listened unseen and saw how the old woman lessened her pain by prayer: "We have all kinds of specialists, but why have we no specialists (equipped with twentieth-century technology) to deal with heartache and heartache?" And in the selections from his notebook which end the collection he says:

It is not positive and negative electrical charges, not neutrons and protons, that should be the subject of art, but the positive and negative in human nature: what, in a simpler age, was designated as Good and Evil.

Leonid Zhukhovitsky's *Astride a Dolphin* is not a great success as a novel: too much of the narrative is slow and fussy. But it is worth reading for its content, and as an instructive example of Soviet popular fiction. Apparently it is popular also in a stage version—and this would almost certainly be an improvement: the moral theme, which is what Soviet audiences so often enjoy, would come over a great deal more economically.

Georgi Nespasov, the narrator, is a journalist known to his friends as "The Giant of the Satire Column," though none of his quoted work could be said to deserve the epithet. As an investigator of scandals and corruption he wields enormous power, as leading journalists do in Soviet life, and he is ready at any time to take off on a thousand-mile flight to look into some report of injustice or misappropriation. He makes a sad misjudgment, however, over a researcher who is trying to push a new drug for leukaemia, and Georgi is faced with the bitter realization that if he had been more sparing in his comments about the researcher's charlatanism he might have saved the life of his best friend, Yuri. In a deathbed scene the author rises to a really moving presentation of Yuri's mistress, Irat, but on the whole the progress of the disease and the discussion of the doctors are treated at such length, and so unimpressively, that one longs for the more controlled poignancy of *Cancer Ward*.

We get a telling view of the inside of a Soviet newspaper office, the kind of journalists who take it as

part of their normal duties to report out the feuds in a block of flats, or other journalists for perhaps the same ones) who use top secret assignments to cover up their amours—"men rescued from the sure by the cold war". Nespasov himself is a tremendous woman, but if the idea was to present him as a heartless egoist, there again the effect has been fudged, though some of his girls are sharply sketched. Only at the very end of the novel, a result of the drug episode, does Georgi venture into self-examination—and he becomes quite lucid, recalling how he had rejected religions, but "the one that lasted longest had been the cult of the Girl". But this kind of knowledge should have developed steadily through the novel. Instead, the author repeatedly slows the story down with a fluff of commonplace or generalized detail: Georgi's shopping for a supper à deux tells us that he "tried to pick the aphrodisiac foods was smoked salmon, perhaps, or caviar, and would have been better off without the phrase entirely."

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years that have passed since Merton's death in Bangkok about a time for judgment on his life or his message. Not indeed there is any lack of material for a literary assessment, as the years closely printed pages of John Higgins's study, amply helpful as it is, always had to be work checked by natives who are either still resident in their country or have only very recently left it.

perhaps ironic that a man whose widely known book was *Bored Silence*, should have been a prodigal writer, that the character for each story would have done little to weaken the effect of each story; and though the book has some local successes, notably incidents which contribute to the land's awareness of the subterranean tensions in South African life, the notion of the continuum tends to sap what strength the book has rather than reinforce it.

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## Pacific passions

NAOE KINOSHITA:  
*Pillar of Fire*  
Translated by Kenneth Strong.  
199pp. Allen and Unwin, £2.95.

*Pillar of Fire* is a pacifist Christian socialist tract designed as propaganda against the Japanese military in the Russo-Japanese war, was first published in Japan in 1904. It may have been effective at that time, but today it seems crude and unconvincing. The frequently verges on the ludicrous.

The story is of a Christian socialist, Shindō, who, openly opposed to the war and the military, is loved by Umeko, the beautiful daughter of a Japanese businessman. He, of course, is an exploiting hypocritical capitalist, who tries to force her to marry an arrogant lecher, Captain Matsushima, of the Japanese

Navy. The highlight—if that is the right word—is the scene where Umeko struggles with Matsushima and tears out one of his eyes.

The translator, Kenneth Strong, struggles gamely with an unpromising script and at times manages to make the author sound quite poetic. But these moments are all too rare. The actual novel is prefaced with the introduction of some fifty pages of the author's life and an analysis of his work. Mr Strong does his best for his author, but although some modern left-wing intellectual in Japan may consider this work an interesting example of protest in the novel of the late Meiji period, although it may have a small place in the history of the Russo-Japanese war, Mr Strong is unlikely to find many readers to share his conclusions. Kinoshita was a more than minor novelist of unsuccessful talent.

## The Christocentric future

THELHARD DE CHARDIN:  
*Christology and Evolution*  
Translated by René Hague.  
192pp. Collins. £2.25.

It is idle to speculate on how Thelhard might have edited his own writings for publication, but if the idea was to present him as a heartless egoist, there again the effect has been fudged, though some of his girls are sharply sketched. Only at the very end of the novel, a result of the drug episode, does Georgi venture into self-examination—and he becomes quite lucid, recalling how he had rejected religions, but "the one that lasted longest had been the cult of the Girl". But this kind of knowledge should have developed steadily through the novel. Instead, the author repeatedly slows the story down with a fluff of commonplace or generalized detail: Georgi's shopping for a supper à deux tells us that he "tried to pick the aphrodisiac foods was smoked salmon, perhaps, or caviar, and would have been better off without the phrase entirely."

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await a more favourable ecclesiastical climate, then the result has been self-defeating. The sketchy epilogue on evil in *The Phenomenon of Man* is in these essays clearly and trenchantly filled out, defining Thelhard's position over against scientific, humanist and Christian critics.

*Christology and Evolution* is a translation of *Comment le croit* (1969). The English version has been given another title since the title essay of the French edition has already been separately published in English as *How I Believe*. The present volume contains twenty pieces spanning the years 1919-1953.

In these essays we encounter Thelhard overtly and repeatedly locating and explaining his points of dispute with traditional Catholic dogma. Certainly those writers who have sought to domesticate Thelhard, to interpret him as basically at one with the received traditions (though employing novel forms of expression), will gain comfort from these essays: I recognize... that at the present moment Christianity... is reaching the end of one of the natural cycles of its existence. The great event with which our day is pregnant, and whose birth we must assist, may very well be, surely, that these two spiritual currents (faith in the world and faith in Christ) may feed, swell, and fertilize one another, and so, by synthesis, make Christianity break through into a new sphere.

conclusion to all that had gone before. As Jean Leclercq remarks, "Thomas Merton was the man Christianity needed in a time of transition which began, not with Vatican II, but with World War II". He had realized that change must come to the Church as to the world it exists to serve—and he was able to accept new challenges because he had long since come to recognize the difference between what must endure and what must, of its nature, know decay and death. This is the theme of *Contemplation in a World of Action*, for underlying all he writes—on the need for renewal in the Church, on contemplation in a world of action, on the meaning of Christian solitude—is a fruitful tension between tradition and the demands of a living world. The monastic life he defends is not a matter of archaology, carefully preserved in its Gothic structures. Rather is it a recall to the essential ground of peace and contemplation which transcends the external forms

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## Jesus as he was?

F. J. SHEED:  
*What difference does Jesus make?*  
242pp. Sheed and Ward. £2.50.

In discussion with a Catholic sixth form Frank Sheed was horrified to learn that none of them seemed to be conscious of any connexion between going to Mass and Jesus Christ. Mass was just something they had to attend on Sunday. But this, Mr Sheed goes on to say, is typical of the whole situation in the Church today—what he calls "the dimming of Christ in men who sincerely believe in him". On this he has written and spoken much already—a reporter described it as Sheed's disease. Books talk about the Christ-event, substituting a happening for a Person—and events, he slyly observes, do not have a Mother.

In this book Mr Sheed makes one more attempt to present Jesus himself as he was. From critics, he thinks, make impossible assumptions. Can we really believe that the Christ of faith was constructed by the early communities out of the Carpenter of Nazareth, as "some think that Plato created Socrates out of the bibulous husband of Xanthippe"? Strong stress is laid on the genuine humanity; and the author makes the

The editor of the series, N. M. Wildiers, has in his foreword correctly shown how far Thelhard's solution to the problem of secularity is to be found in the very centre of the Christian faith, in an updated Christianity. Thelhard "urges us to go beyond every form of secularism by including the values of the earth in a Christocentric vision of the world". The test of Thelhard's vision will hinge on the one hand on whether the churches can make the evolutionary jump into a new way of life and thought, and on the other hand on whether the rising unchurched and unchurchable generations in East and West will be stirred to carry out and guide to completion the great work of a convergent, Christ-centred evolution.

The translation reads well. But comparison with the French original reveals some misleading circumlocutions and unaccountable errors, e.g. the translation of "Jésus" by "Christ". At important points the effect of the translation is to render Thelhard's expression rather more tentative than it is in the French. So, too, the editor's foreword and some of his footnotes give the impression, perhaps quite unintentional, of apologizing for Thelhard. This is unfortunate. Thelhard deserves to be heard freely and without interference.

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good point that the physical body of Jesus was not an instrument specially prepared for him, but something that came to him from a long ancestry, with innate dispositions, frailties and demands, with which he had to cope like all other men. Some things would "come naturally" to him; some he would have found harder and less congenial.

The treatment is forthright and refreshingly lay, and the language strong and trenchant. (The association with childhood has been unfortunate: "we do not automatically think of him as a masculine male. The Old Masters seem to have used a female model.") We are shown a real Man, with a character, as depicted, the author claims, by the evangelists. But Mr Sheed gives one the impression that he reads the Gospels as though they were flat surfaces. In what some will find a strangely old-fashioned way, with little idea of their gradual formation, although he holds sound views on the very old critical questions. He regards it, for example, as certain that St Paul had read the Gospel of Luke. This is a read What is here said so well would have been less restricted appeal if he gave a bit more of its due to New Testament scholarship.

## At the ultimate

FRANZ ROSENZWEIG:  
*The Star of Redemption*  
Translated by William W. Hallo.  
445pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £3.

In recent years the importance of Franz Rosenzweig's work for Jewish and general philosophy has been increasingly appreciated. As recently as 1953 Reinhold Niebuhr ranked him with Martin Buber as "one of the two Jewish religious thinkers who have profoundly affected the thought of both Jewish and Christian thinkers". And Niebuhr added that Rosenzweig "had an equal, and possibly larger, share in the religious philosophy of modern Judaism".

That is one compelling reason why this edition of Rosenzweig's magnum opus is welcome. It would be idle to claim that the English translation is any clearer than the German original. On the contrary, certain nuances and allusions to German classical literature have been lost. But it is a considerable achievement by William Hallo to have produced an English rendering that is at least no more difficult than the German.

Rosenzweig was born in 1886 in Kassel, the son of comfortable, German-Jewish parents, and grew up in an atmosphere of optimistic assimilationism. He studied medicine and then modern history and philosophy (under Meinecke and Rickert respectively). The fruit of those years was Rosenzweig's two-volume *Hegel and der Staat* (1920). It earned Meinecke's enmity, but well before then Rosenzweig had turned away from history and idealist philosophy towards a Judaism that had been represented only minimally in the parental home. The first movement in this direction seems to have been made in 1913, with a transfiguring attendance at a

synagogue on the Day of Atonement. A few years later came Rosenzweig's first contact with East European Jewry in Warsaw, as a volunteer with the German army on the Eastern Front. The product of that period was a series of army postcards sent home from the Macedonian Front, out of which *The Star of Redemption* (1921) was eventually born.

This is not only a classic of twentieth-century existentialist thought but also marks a significant contribution to the religious philosophy of twentieth-century Judaism. There is a turning away from philosophical and religious idealism, from history that obscured the individual (Rosenzweig said of Meinecke: "he treats history as though it were a platonic dialogue, not murder and manslaughter") to the world of Schelling, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche. But at the centre of Rosenzweig's thinking stood an extra-historical Judaism to be sharply distinguished from Christianity, which was caught up in the world, and the State, whose "only reality" was war and revolution. The Jew already lived at that ultimate point for which the Christian is still striving.

It was this comparison and conviction that brought Rosenzweig close to the traditional Jewish standpoint of such thinkers as S. R. Hirsch or Isaac Breuer, and alienated him from the Zionists. With the former he shared the view that the Law is withdrawn from the historical process; from the latter he was separated through the Zionist insistence on the negation of the Diaspora and the assimilation of Jewish nationhood to that of "the nations of the world". For all its complexity and depth, few works can be set alongside *The Star of Redemption* as an introduction to the wealth of modern Jewish thought.

## T.L.S.

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